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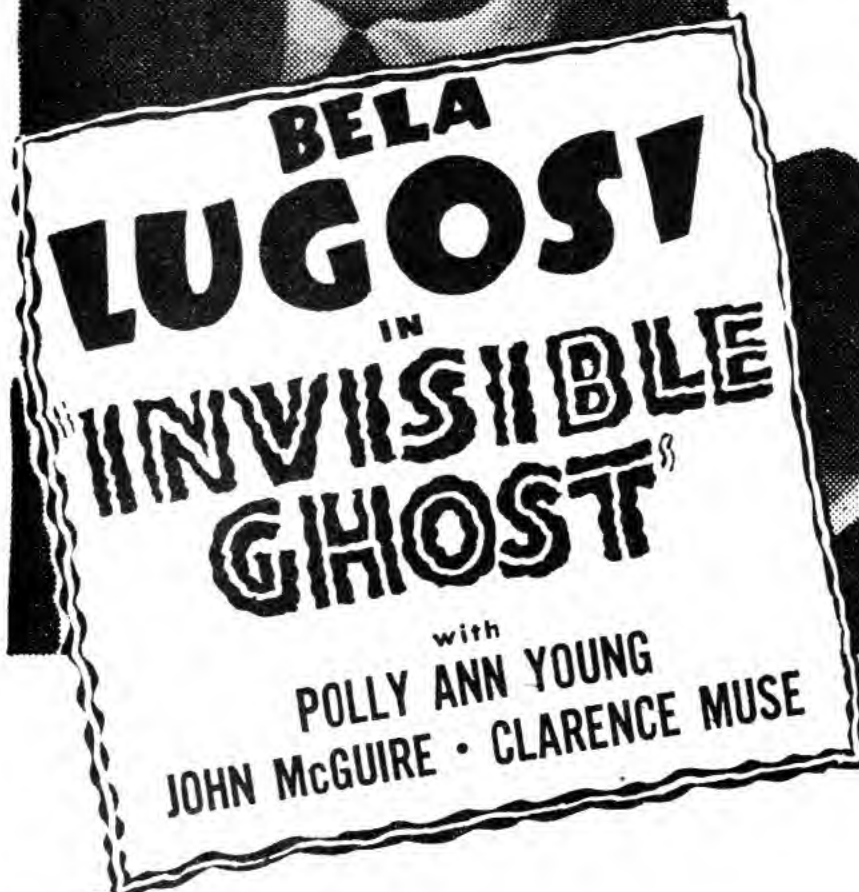
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William T. Barnett
Layout

Marta Dobrovitz
Associate Editor

Cover Artist:
Dave Stevens

Japanese Film Consultant:
David G. Milner

Creative Consultant:
Mike Vraney

Italian Film Consultant:
Steven Flacassier

This issue dedicated to the genius of Dave Stevens.

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DEEP INSIDE CULT MOVIES

by Michael Copner

Rarely has a major studio release come and gone as rapidly as Disney's *Ed Wood*. Here in Los Angeles it lasted three weeks. At showcase windows and bus stops there were posters for *Ed Wood* with the announcement, "Now Playing At Theatres Everywhere" long after the film had left town. Hopefully this picture will have a long life on video, for it is a treasure, and it's doubtful if every film fan had a chance to experience it during that quick three week run.

Prior to and during the first week of the film's theatrical run, there was plenty of excited speculation as to whether or not Edward D. Wood, Jr. would finally posthumously receive his star on the Hollywood Boulevard Walk of Fame. At first it seemed like a go. Many fans signed petitions requesting this late-in-the-day recognition. The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce requires a \$5,000 "maintenance fee" to place the celebrity star on Hollywood Blvd., and Disney Studios seemed ready to pay the tab — naturally, since it would be great publicity for their new movie.

But suddenly it was all systems stop, and the word was that there would be no such celebrity status symbol for poor Eddie. Official word from the Chamber of Commerce was that they did not like to establish a star on the Walk when the person was no longer alive to appear at the ceremony given in their honor. This is utter nonsense, since a star was recently given to Bruce Lee who died back in 1973. I suppose that someone in charge got around to looking at the movie, or reading "Nightmare Of Ecstasy," and saw just who they were about to commemorate. An alcoholic, cross-dressing pornographer may not be the weirdest thing in Hollywood, but such creatures aren't supposed to be celebrated by any official recognition. It could corrupt the morals of the decent people still working here, and lower the standards the world's come to expect of Tinseltown.

Sorry, Eddie.

Here we are, together again for the first time! Mamie Van Doren is greeted by *Cult Movies* editor Michael Copner during Mamie's recent appearance at Baby Janes of Hollywood. Lines of fans crowded the famed memorabilia shop for a chance to meet Mamie and secure autographs. We were delighted to speak with her, and look forward to interviewing her soon for an upcoming issue. Thanks to Charles Moniz and Roy Windham, operators of Baby Jane for sponsoring this great personal appearance event!

Letters have come to us declaring one uniform request. They love the series of features we've been running wherein David Milner interviews actors, writers, and directors involved with the popular giant monster films of Japan. We've been granted some pretty amazing material by Mr. Milner, including interviews with esteemed director Ishiro Honda, and one with the actor who plays the part of Godzilla! Naturally we're proud to have access to these interviews, but many readers wonder why we've curtailed the printing of any photos or ad art from the new Godzilla films.

The answer is both simple — and NOT simple. But I'll attempt an explanation that even an American might understand. Toho Studios does not look upon our printing of Godzilla photos as "free

publicity," but rather as an infringement of rights to their trademarked, copyrighted character. They feel that any magazines should pay a licensing fee to run Godzilla photos, and the fee quoted to us was five thousand dollars per photograph. Since five grand is nearly our budget for the next two years, we don't have enough to set aside for even one photograph of the green rubber lizard.

We thought of illustrating the new interviews with photos from old Godzilla movies released stateside by American International or Universal back in the 1960's. After all, these publicity materials all carry the licensing clearance: "Permission granted for reproduction in newspapers or periodicals." But Toho claims, No; all rights to these publicity photos have now been rescinded. If we print such photos we're subject to a lawsuit from Toho. Makes one wonder just who won the war, doesn't it?

Many other American movie magazines are printing stills of Godzilla on a regular basis, and I can't imagine that they're paying five G's-a-pop for Big G pics. But for the time being, and until some reasonable arrangement can be made, we'll continue to honor the wishes of Toho Studios; you won't find any photos of Godzilla in our pages.

Conrad Brooks, Dolores Fuller and husband along with Vampira meet at the Hollywood premiere of Ed Wood at the Vista Theatre. September 28, 1994 was declared Ed Wood Day by the mayor of Los Angeles. Kathy Wood was also on hand to receive an award on behalf of her late husband, Ed Wood.



After waiting for it for about six hundred years or so, Something Weird Video has finally published their first huge catalog — and that really means huge! Many creative artists worked on pulling this catalog together, a 120 page delight filled with over a thousand rare or never before seen videos available for the first time. It's heavily illustrated, and if you think it looks a bit like our own magazine, that's certainly no accident. SWV owner, Mike Vraney flew to Los Angeles with the finished artwork in hand, bringing it to the same printer where we have our work done, to insure getting "that *Cult Movies* look" to his catalog. Get a copy of it today; you'll have reading material for the next three months. They've got an order form for the new catalog on our back cover.

And another luminary who uses our printer! Everybody wants to have an O. J. Simpson story, and at last we've got one. Recently I stopped by the print shop and who should be there but the father of Robert Shapiro. As you know, the young Shapiro is head of the Simpson defense team, and dear old dad has a job working as a gopher for his son's law firm. The father was there, at the printers, picking up new envelopes and business cards. Dad looks a lot like his son, only happier. He wouldn't talk to me about the Simpson trial (he's certainly not allowed to), but he was very interested in *Cult Movies*. I showed him a copy of our last issue, and

he leafed through it, commenting on some of the photos. "Are we going to be in here?" he asked in a jovial way. He took a copy of the magazine, made a few more remarks and then was on his way. And for some unaccountable reason, it delighted me that both Robert Shapiro and Something Weird Video use the same printer that does "Cult Movies" Magazine.

Back in issue #10, we forgot to mention that our list of Harry Novak titles had originally appeared in the Swedish magazine, "Critical Condition" #6 (Sept. '93), and was provided by the writers and publishers, Fred Adelman and Bertil Lundgren. These gentlemen are among Europe's foremost authorities of exploitation films from around the world. We'll be featuring more about them (and their great publishing efforts) in our next issue.

Our favorite Ed Wood luminary, Mr. Conrad Brooks is back in the directors chair again. His first effort, *Mystery In Shadows*, has been written about in these pages. Now, as we go to press, The Amazing Conrad has been hired to direct a new horror thriller, *Vampire Wolf*, which will be released direct to video in the summer of this year. Our

publisher, Buddy Barnett, visited the set to see Conrad in action, and was impressed by what he saw. "Conrad was moving the camera into a variety of positions to cover the location scene, and really working with the actors," says Barnett. "He knows what he wants, and he's going for it like a veteran director. I've got to assume he's going to turn out to be a better director than Ed Wood."

There'll be more location and in-studio shooting on *Vampire Wolf*, and if all goes well we'll have a pictorial article on it in our next issue. Go, Conrad, Go!!!

Also with our next issue, *Cult Movies* begins an all new policy which I'm sure you'll enjoy. At least once each year we plan to include a movie book as part of a given issue, absolutely free. The book will be printed along with the page count as a regular part of that issue. Naturally it will increase our page count, but it won't increase the cover price or our low advertising rates. Next issue our bonus will be a book-length biography on actor George Reeves. Later this year, we'll be running an amazing history of Azteca Studios of Mexico.

There have been books on Superman, but never an actual biographical book on George Reeves. This will be a genuine first; a complete book on the life, career, and unresolved death of Reeves — complete with over 75 photos. This avant-garde

"book-a-zine" won't be shorting our regular readers on the usual line up of goodies. There'll be Lugosi, giant Japanese monsters, Ed Wood, nudie-cuties, superheroes, and whatever else you'd expect to find in Cult Movies. And in addition, you'll get a complete book as part of the zine, as our free gift to you. The book is entitled "George Reeves; The Man, The Myth, and The Mystery," and is written by media authority Jan Alan Henderson. Within these pages, Mr. Henderson delves into the tricky and elusive subject of Reeves' death and the possible cover-up that followed, and even chronicles the eerie subject of the apparent supernatural haunting of the Reeves house.

Writer Jan Henderson is no stranger to our pages. Having been with us since our sixth issue, he has contributed a wide range of articles, including a piece on the state of movie collectibles, and a remembrance of John Andrews.

In this issue you're now reading, Henderson takes us behind the scenes at Republic Studios, to uncover the secrets of special effects wizards Howard and Theodore Lydecker. This article was originally published by *American Cinematographer* magazine in December of 1991, and is a remembrance by family, friends, and co-workers of the brothers. The article also includes rare photos from Theodore Lydecker's private collection, provided by his son, George Lydecker.

In addition to Henderson's literary efforts, he has long been a staple on the Los Angeles music scene. He was an original member of the shock-rock band "Haunted Garage," and later formed a spin-off band "Nyck Varoom's Tomb" (which featured scream queen Yvette Vickers on vocals).



Mamie Van Doren with Cult Movies Editor Michael Copner at Baby Janes of Hollywood.

He has worked as a special effects technician on the 1984 film *Creature*, and put in a stint at Don Post Studios, where he made Tor Johnson masks. For years he's been a regular fixture at one of our favorite magazines, *Filmfax* writing features, along with music & video reviews.

But this may well be his greatest accomplishment. Jan promises our readers a super treat with

a long-awaited biography of the late George Reeves, TV's first Superman. The book will be yours as a part of our next issue; stay tuned!

In the meantime, we've got tons of fun lined up for you in THIS issue, so — On With The Show!

Enjoy The Zine!
Michael Copner,
Editor

LETTERS

Cult Movies gets better every issue, and Number 12 is just sensational. Every article in this issue is well-crafted and interesting.

Glad to see my fellow Annistonian, Katherine Orrison come aboard. Tell her I liked the piece on an old favorite of mine, Joan Woodbury. Tell her also, I see her mother and father occasionally at the country club, and see her uncle Chuck almost weekly. Her parents and uncle and I grew up together.

Again, congratulations on your ever better publication.

Cordially,
David F. Friedman
Anniston, Alabama

Some people might wonder what in the world anyone would have to say about Bela Lugosi after all the magazine and book material that's been published over the years. But *Cult Movies* manages to come up with great biographical details and some jaw-dropping visuals never before presented. With that in mind, I was so happy to see you give such great treatment to Boris Karloff in your latest issue. The British newspaper clippings were especially interesting. Karloff may well be a genius, but it's funny to see the different line he took while talking to the press when he was back home in jolly old England.

Thanks for the continued good work.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Virto

The Joan Woodbury article is one of the classiest profiles you've ever run, and Katherine Orrison is in the same league as Lisa Mitchell. And, speaking of Lisa Mitchell, probably your best writer, her "Mummy Dearest" article is the best I've read from her yet. Her insight into the Karloff Mummy is on the mark, and her candor quite witty and amusing. Speaking of Karloff, now, the Sara Karloff interview was wonder-

ful, quaint; she seems a very charming woman.

Terrance Jennings Wharton found a peculiar weakness of mine; those intermission trailers for the drive-in shows were sometimes more entertaining (in a brain-damaged sort of way) than many of the feature films run at those venues. The best of them had a cheesy sort of mantric lure to them.

I am snake-fascinated with "Casual Company" by Ed Wood the original. Whatever that guy had originated with his writing, and this novel flows like one of his films. To be fair, *Jail Bait* is one of his best, and not a bad C-film, though the sequences with Steve Reeves removing and putting on his shirt in Lyle Talbot's police office are a bit bizarre (why is he doing that?)

I don't usually rave too much about anything, but this issue of *Cult Movies* is truly fine; you've gone one step ahead of yourselves this time. Keep the great work coming.

Sincerely,
Robb Rucker
Detroit, MI

It may sound weird, but I was deeply moved to read about those Satanists in Oklahoma who kidnapped the ashes of Peter Lorre. I thought, there but for the grace of relative mental health go I.

I myself have been violently in love with Lorre since the age of nine. Though my Lorremania has gone in somewhat more conventional channels (poster and still collecting, a tendency to salt my conversations with phrases like, "It's a go, Dr. Go...gol," and "But what was I to do? He was so big, and I was so little.") I can almost understand what motivated the Oklahoma gang. The Lorre "creep" persona, with all its understated violence, pathos, and sly humor, pulls at something deep, dark and Freudian in us all. And Lorre himself was such a hypnotic performer, it's perfectly conceivable that the more suggestible among us might think he was the sort of person who hung

out with sorcerers.

You have to wonder, though, if these Lorre lovers had ever bothered to read anything about the actor Lorre himself, how they could have done something like this to him. Considering how Lorre loathed his "creep" public image, it would have been the ultimate blow to him to have had it taken at face value like this, to be treated not as a person who prized his own sensitivity, dignity and humaneness, but as some sort of powdered monster who could be reconstituted.

It makes me think: this, after all, is what publications like *Cult Movies* are for. They're a meeting ground between our private fantasies about stars like Lorre, and the sobering facts about their real lives and work. The sort of fandom you encourage is a healthy, life-enhancing tradition. Let's keep it up. Let's share our mutual enthusiasms, and teach each other to appreciate artists like Lorre with the proper measure of intelligence, respect and sensible good humor.

Yours very truly,
Anne Sharp

I was half way through reading the Barry Mahon article, in a section when he was talking about his relationship with Errol Flynn, that it clicked. Five years ago I worked with a pair of Mahon brothers, Chan and Barrett, whose father, they told me, had been Errol Flynn's manager. They were the sons of this exploitation giant (whose films I was unaware of at the time), and I only realized it five years later!

The work we shared was in putting together Glenn Larsen's short-lived science-fiction action series *The Highwayman*, which starred Sam (Flash Gordon) Jones and Australian wild-man and battery salesman, Jacko. Chan was one of the show's producers. He was the young one with long hair that you could clown with. Barrett worked in transportation, in charge of picture cars; that is, any vehicle which is seen by the camera. Now, this was a futuristic action show with lots of strange vehicles and hardware, all done on a Roger Corman budget. I was the office coordinating for the transportation department, and as such worked very closely with the hyper and infectious Barrett. He did miracle work, getting us strange prototype cars from Detroit, transforming Ford Tauruses into futuristic cop cars and battered vans into armored trucks.

(continued)

In the interview, Mahon only mentions his daughter's involvement in the TV Errol Flynn bio-pic *My Wicked, Wicked Ways*. I remember Barrett telling me, however, that he and Chan were both involved in that production as well; although I can no longer recall in what capacity.

I remember them both well, and it's nice now to look back on a near-brush with the near-legendary from a different perspective.

Best,
Ron Ford

"The Road To Las Vegas" (*Cult Movies* #11) was yet another informative essay by Frank J. Dello Stritto. The theater work of Bela Lugosi is an aspect of his career frequently neglected by horror historians. I cannot recall such a detailed compendium of Bela's stage life since the excellent 1976 biography by Robert Cremer, which included a stageography. Mr. Dello Stritto makes several references to the Cremer biography (*Lugosi: The Man Behind The Cape*).

Vampira's recollections of Lugosi, Ed Wood and Tor Johnson were fascinating. I had long accepted the legend that Wood directed many of his films while in drag. Vampira dispels this myth by stating that Wood did not crossdress at work "except during the filming of *Glen Or Glenda*." Vampira's contention that Wood exploited the Lugosi persona is undeniable. However, Ed Wood undoubtedly felt genuine affection and sympathy for the fallen horror king. This fondness is obvious in numerous quotes from Wood in the Robert Cremer book, and is substantiated by many other sources, including the comments of Valda Hansen in *Cult Movies*.

Vampira alludes to a one hundred dollar donation made by Frank Sinatra to alleviate Lugosi's medical expenses. The Cremer book states that Frank Sinatra sent a one thousand dollar check to Lugosi during Bela's hospital confinement in 1955. Might this be two separate donations, or merely a discrepancy regarding a single contribution?

I first discovered the bizarre and surreal work of Ed Wood back in the seventies, but I never dreamed that a mainstream film biography would eventually be produced! I hope Ed is gazing down upon this posthumous adulation with amusement and glee.

I enjoyed the Forrest J Ackerman interview, particularly his anecdotes about Lugosi's final years. I periodically watch my video copy of *Lugosi: The Forgotten King* (1985), an entertaining documentary ably hosted by the venerable Mr. Ackerman.

Timothy M. Walters

Not since the 1984 Reagan landslide has anything depressed me so much as the apparent inability of Tim Burton's amazing biopic *Ed Wood* to find the mainstream audience it deserves, at least locally. The movie played the local multiplex for only two weeks - to small ecstatic audiences of eggheads and nuds - while the big crowds went for *Forrest Gump* and *Only You*. During that period, I managed to see *Ed Wood* three times. The weekend that it was canceled I intended to take my father, in loving repayment for taking me to see *Planet Of The Apes*, *The Omega Man*, and *Santa Claus Conquers The Martians* when I was a boy so many years ago. There are plenty of reasons to support *Ed Wood*, not the least of which is Columbia Pictures' refusal to produce the movie because - get this - they didn't want to release a black and white film! Can you imagine? I'd like to see those bastards thoroughly embarrassed - and it may happen yet. This movie is a classic; it's going to have legs.

Leo Valentine
Vestal, NY

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MOVIE & VIDEO REVIEWS

Abbott & Costello

Abbott And Costello Go To Mars (Universal-International, 1953)

Comin' Round The Mountain (U-I, 1951)

A & C Meet The Keystone Kops (U-I, 1955)

When examining the movie career of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello (or, for that matter, other film comedians with a prolific output), conventional wisdom informs us that the team's earlier entries are superior to the later ones (which come off as pale imitations of past triumphs). Academically speaking, it's a point that's difficult to contradict. However, many fans—myself included—grew to love A&C by watching their post-1949 efforts, either theatrically or via television airings in the 1960s.

As far as this (then) young admirer was concerned, nearly every Abbott and Costello comedy was terrifically entertaining. With the passage of time came a more critical assessment; with a total of 36 feature films to their credit, the boys had more than their share of second and third-rate outings. But this doesn't cloud the fond memories of my first impressions, which prompts me to defend three of MCA Home Video's latest Abbott and Costello releases—titles that are considered bottom-of-the-barrel, even by their staunchest supporters.

The most noteworthy film of the group is *Abbott And Costello Go To Mars*, generally dismissed as their worst picture, a stigma it certainly doesn't deserve. (Have you ever tried sitting through *Lost In Alaska*?—Yikes!!) It may come as a big surprise to a number of movie historians, but this engagingly silly sci-fi sendup is actually quite popular in a cultish sort of way. To be sure, the boys are older and the film never reaches the hilarious heights of *Hold That Ghost* or *Abbott And Costello Meet Frankenstein*. Nevertheless, the movie offers a wealth of good, old-fashioned no-brainer fun as Bud and Lou accidentally launch a rocketship and go whizzing around Manhattan, New Orleans, and, eventually, the vixen-populated planet of Venus. (Is there anyone out there who is still unaware of the fact that they travel to Venus, not Mars?)

In *Comin' Round The Mountain* (the title was given as *Abbott And Costello Comin' Round The Mountain* on some of the original publicity materials), the team invaded Ma and Pa Kettle territory as they searched for hidden gold in the Kentucky hills. The result is one of their weaker comedies, although it's not an entirely disagreeable way to kill 77 minutes. There is some amusing wordplay between the straight man and the comic, and their encounter with mountain witch Margaret Hamilton is a gem. Most commentators object to the five musical number performed by co-star Dorothy Shay ("The Park Avenue Hillbilly"). While there isn't a memorable song in the bunch, Shay possesses a bouncy, unpretentious singing style that makes these tunes far more palatable than the ponderous love ballads heard in other A&C pictures.

Abbott And Costello Meet The Keystone Kops is an affectionate tribute to the early days of filmmaking, silent comedy in particular. Homage aside, much of the picture seems labored; a lengthy sequence with the boys as stunt pilots is marred by horribly obvious rear-screen projection. However, like *Comin' Round The Mountain*, the film does move along briskly enough and builds to a spectacular chase climax, courtesy of the Universal stunt department. With an emphasis on knockabout slapstick (their trademark dialogue routines are virtually nonexistent here), *Meet The Keystone Kops* has moments that should please indulgent fans, especially younger ones.

Since the pair's best comedies have already been released on home video, this latest group—which also includes the uneven *Abbott And Costello In The Foreign Legion*—might be perceived as spoiled goods. But for those with a fondness for this team, these titles are definitely worth a second look, and rate a moderate reappraisal.

Reviewed by Ted Okuda

Dead Men Walk (1943)

Dead Men Walk possesses two main assets: George Zucco and George Zucco. He plays twin brothers, one a kind-hearted doctor and the other an evil student of the occult who returns from the grave as a vampire to seek revenge on his saintly twin. You see, the "good" brother had murdered the bad to rid the world of his "foul presence," and a malevolent bloodsucker is not one to forgive easily. Zucco plays his two polar-opposite roles well, giving even Karloff a run for his money in the kindly doctor role, and imbuing the thoroughly evil vampire with a cultured yet ruthless quality. Dwight Frye is also good, playing (for the last time) his usual maniacal henchman role. Frye's plaintive cries for help as he lies trapped under a heavy dresser at the fiery climax are both pitiful and chilling in their delivery. The film's plot is nondescript, following the usual love interest and doctor's daughter and closing with the standard climactic conflagration (which consumes both twins). But the film does carry an interesting underlying theme. If one looks at the twins as separate manifestations of the same entity, then by having the "good" twin die in the process of destroying the "bad" twin, it shows that one cannot upset the balance in human nature and remain intact. Pure good cannot function without the balance of the other, darkerside. Or, without the symbolism, a more cynical viewer could see the dual-death as simply the screenwriters having to bow to the omnipresent Production Code in not letting a crime (even the murder of an evil twin) go unpunished. All in all, *Dead Men Walk* is a low-budget diversion enriched by Zucco's and Frye's performances but little else.

Reviewed by Bryan Senn

Deep Space (1986)

Fred Olen Ray, who's been called "the Roger Corman of the '80s" directed, co-produced, and co-wrote this fun, light-hearted *Alien* rip-off that oddly feels like it was made 30 years ago. It's got the same homey feel as many of the '50s low-budget monster movies, with a small cast, claustrophobic atmosphere, and tight, no-nonsense direction, but with the added bonus of modern technology and effects. Production-wise, it's definitely on-the-cheap, but there's a great monster—a huge, vicious *Alien*-like creature that shoots out organic tentacles from its body to wrap around and drag its screaming victims to its waiting jaws. *Deep Space* is really a misnomer since all the action takes place on Earth in the present day (no doubt due to budget restrictions).

The killer organism was bred in space by a clandestine military-funded operation searching for the "ultimate weapon," and something went wrong, causing the space lab to crash in Charles Napier's precinct. Napier plays a tough-guy cop who bucks bureaucracy and the Federal agency bad guys to go one-on-one with the vicious monster. Napier is a likeable, soft-spoken, no-nonsense hero—sort of a Ken Tobey of the '80s (he even looks a bit like Tobey). The picture's pace starts out slowly but soon picks up to a grand, no-holds-barred finale with big guns, plenty of slime, and even a chainsaw! All this and great atmosphere too—an old warehouse replete with dripping water, fog-smoke, and plenty of backlighting.

The supporting cast is adequate, with Ron Glass (from TV's *Barney Miller*) as Napier's ill-fated partner and Ann Turkel as the love-interest, but big Bo Svenson stands out as Napier's by-the-book boss who ends up *Walking Tall* with an axe. What really sets this one above so many other forgettable post-*Alien* low-budget independent quickies are the liberal doses of humors sprinkled throughout. How about this for a bit of choice dialogue: Turkel: "What about me?" Napier: "You want a gun?" Turkel: "No, I'm going to wrestle [the alien] to the ground and YOU'RE going to shoot him! Of course I want a gun!" Later, when Napier first meets the large alien (after tangling with a much

smaller, newly-hatched specimen), Turkel asks him, "What the hell are we running from," to which Napier replies, "You remember that little creature we saw at Jerry's house? Imagine that 50 times bigger and PISSED OFF." Even Big Bo gets into the act when, after Napier finally cuts the alien into slimy pieces, Svenson picks up the decapitated head and informs it, "You have the right to remain silent." Nothing subtle here, just good clean monster fun. What is so refreshing is that the humor is not condescending to the subject matter but allows the audience to laugh with, rather than at, the situations. Fred Olen Ray, a fan-turned-filmmaker, has an obvious love and respect for the genre, and it is evident in the care and style he takes with his script and direction. The film never takes itself too seriously, but remains a straightforward, fun "monster movie" for the '80s, something that was sorely lacking in the puerile decade of Spielberg and Lucas.

Reviewed by Bryan Senn

The Devil's Nightmare

(1971, Monterey Home Video)

Directed by Jean Brismee

With Erika Blanc, Jean Servais, Daniel Emilfork, Jacques Monseau, Ivana Novak, Lucienne Raimberg.

Modern horror films have settings ranging from shopping malls to your basic cabin in the woods, but for my money they still haven't improved upon the spooky old castle. The strongest point of this well paced Italian/Belgian co-production is its delightfully creepy atmosphere.

In a pre-title sequence shot in a monochrome blue, Baron Von Runberg (Servais) awaits the birth of his child, in the midst of the bombing of Berlin. The Baroness dies in childbirth, but the Baron seems more concerned with the gender of his progeny. Upon learning that he has a daughter, Baron Von Runberg drives a knife through the child.

Years later a lost bus load of tourists ask directions from a reed-thin nosferatu-ish character (Emilfork who appeared in several Fellini films). He directs them to the castle of Baron Von Runberg who might be able to put them up for the night. When the travelers arrive at the castle they find that a mysterious phone caller has already informed the Baron of their coming.

Over dinner the Baron tells his guests about the family curse. In the twelfth century a Von Runberg sold his soul to the devil. As part of the deal the eldest daughter of each subsequent generation is doomed to become a succubus, a female demon who lures her victims into committing mortal sins before she murders them, thus sentencing their souls to damnation.

Speak of the devil (pun most definitely intended), another visitor to the castle arrives in the curvaceous form of Lisa Miller (Blanc). Sporting an outfit only slightly less daring than that worn by Vampirella, Lisa proceeds to work her charms on the other guests, particularly Mr. Sorel (Raimberg), a young priest in training.

We soon learn that Lisa is the illegitimate daughter of the Baron's late brother, making her the target of the family curse. Throughout the evening she does away with most of the guests, taking on a ghastly, cadaverous appearance with each murder. Sorel proves to be her toughest opponent, and the devil himself (the same sinister looking individual who directed the travellers to the castle in their first place) steps in and strikes a deal with the seminarist.

The terrific atmosphere and cryptic ending are reminiscent of Joseph Larraz's *Vampyres*, and the two would make a fine double feature.

This film is also available from Video Kingdom under the title *Succubus* (not to be confused with the Jess Franco film of the same title). While the other version contains a few additional scenes (a lesbian love scene, and a scene of another female character in her underwear), the color is so badly washed out that much of the film looks as if it were shot in black and white. Stick with the version from Monterey Home Video: the film has also been known as *The Longest Night Of the Devil*, *The Devil Walks At Midnight* and *Vampire Playgirls*.

Reviewed by Matthew Bradshaw

CULT MOVIES

Diary Of A Madman (UA, 1963)

With Vincent Price, Nancy Kovack. From MGM/UA.

Nancy Kovack has a habit of keeping herself in the public eye: She started out as a TV actress, made the move to movies, retired from acting to marry world-renowned maestro Zubin Mehta, and now she's up to her lovely high cheekbones in the Whitewater mess (she was bilked by "Friends of Bill" the McDougals). Her only horror movie was the Admiral Pictures production/UA release *Diary Of A Madman* (1963) with Vincent Price. Short stories by Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) were the ostensible basis of the Technicolor "by-evil-possessed" thriller, but the true impetus was the ticket window triumphs of the Edgar Allan Poe/Price movies being ground out by Roger Corman and AIP. In this serving of warmed-over Corman (directed by old-timer Reginald LeBorg), Price is a much-respected 19th-century French magistrate who falls under the spell of an evil spirit, "The Horla." Fretting over his mental state, Price accepts the advice of a psychiatrist (Nelson Olmstead) and takes up a new hobby, art, bringing him in contact with model Kovack, who accepts 10 francs an hour to pose for a clay bust which Price titles "The Laughing Woman." Price falls for Kovack, not realizing that she is an avaricious married woman attracted by his wealth and position. After Kovack's painter-husband (Chris Warfield) creates a scene at Price's home, Price succumbs to the power of the Horla, goes to Kovack's apartment and, in a scene unmistakably inspired by Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), hacks at the screaming girl with a knife. (Kovack even pulls down a curtain as she dies, identical to Janet Leigh and the shower curtain.) Later, at home and "himself" again, Price discovers a trail of blood which leads up to his attic workshop, a knife embedded in the bust of Kovack, and (beneath the clay) her disembodied head. (These two horror scenes, strong by early-'60s standards, are the best in the movie, which is otherwise drawn-out and dull.)

Kovack is at her loveliest in the decorative role, flirtatious and insouciant, and adds a dash of color to the stifling, talky "thriller." Price's eye is first attracted to her painting (Kovack is dressed as a ballerina), situated in the display window of an art gallery; she appears behind him, striking up a conversation, and the smitten Price suggests that he immortalize her in art as "a Greek goddess, perhaps" — an in-joke reference to her Jason And The Argonauts role? (Kovack says she still has the painting, although at least one copy of it was burned in the movie. The busts were broken in the movie.) The treacherous beauty gets her comeuppance in the *Psycho*-esque murder scene, which Kovack had a hard time playing because Price tickled her before the first take and gave her a hard-to-shake case of the giggles.

Outside of Kovack's scenes, though, the movie was a letdown, light on horror and atmosphere, heavy on dead scenes and poor dialogue. (Stephen Roberts as a police official gets stuck with the worst lines, including the Ed Wood-ish "Murderers! They're all the same! Humanity would be much better off without them!") The inspiration (the Poe series) was unmistakable right from the first shot, a fog-shrouded sound stage hilltop funeral visually identical to any number of similar scenes in the AIP movies. But Corman's stylish Poes never looked better than when measured against Small's flat, cheap-looking imitations (*Diary*, *Twice-Told Tales*, *Tower Of London*), with *Diary* sizing up as perhaps the drabdest of these clones. De Maupassant's original story may have had the makings of a good, compact horror movie, but the combination of Robert E. Kent's polite and chatty script and LeBorg's plodding pacing was a devastating one-two punch for viewers accustomed to AIP's livelier, more lurid Poe yarns. Price, too, is not at his best, perhaps as a result of LeBorg's handling (the director worked to keep the actor's tendency toward ham in check) and perhaps partly due to the hard-to-fathom script in which Price's "respectable" character sometimes sinks to reprehensible acts even without the Horla's urging. (Scenes of Price arguing with the transparent demon find former Invisible Man Price on the receiving end of mischief.) Gray at the temples and smarmily solicitous in bearing, Price

gives a performance as artificial as Kent's stilted dialogue or Daniel Haller's highly-colored, overlit sets.

The most interesting thing about *Diary*, truth be told, is the fact that the original story, de Maupassant's "Le Horla" (1887), a tale of hallucination, was an ominous sign of things to come for the author known as France's greatest short story writer. In 1888 his violently psychotic brother Herve was committed to an asylum, telling Guy, "But it's you who are mad, do you hear? You're the crazy one of the family." (Herve died in the asylum in 1889.) Maupassant cut his own throat in a suicide attempt a few years later and was removed, reportedly in a straitjacket, to a Paris institution where he later died. Maybe there's more to this Horla business than meets the eye...?

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

The Diabolical Dr. Z (1965)

This French/West German co-production from the diabolical director Jess Franco (using the pseudonym "Henri Baum") may be that prolific Spanish filmmaker's best movie. Best known to Western audi-



ences for his 1970 version of *Count Dracula* starring Christopher Lee, Franco has been turning out the European equivalent of drive-in movie fodder since 1959 (a reported 130 features to date!) *The Diabolical Dr. Z* centers around Dr. Zimmer, who has developed a bizarre machine which blends acupuncture and hypnosis to transform people into obedient slaves. Dr. Z explains his reasoning like this: "Thanks to me, all the killers, all the abnormal, all the sadists, all the maniacs could be transmuted into wise and good persons." OK Doc, but the poor physician never has a chance to prove his theory for he dies of a coronary induced by his ridicule at a scientific convention. Consequently, his rather cold daughter decides to avenge his death by destroying the three prominent scientists who she feels were responsible. The instrument of her vengeance is a gorgeous exotic dancer with two-inch fingernails that goes by the stage name of "Miss Death" (real name "Nadia," played by the strikingly beautiful Estella Bain). So Miss Zimmer kidnaps Miss Death and subjects her to the mind-control machine. Watch out for the vicious fingernails! (which incidentally have been treated with the paralyzing drug Curare). Running throughout this unique film is an undercurrent of sadistic sensuality, largely due to the presence of Estella Bain. Her bizarrely erotic "dance of death" in the nightclub sequence is worth the price of admission alone. And after being turned into an unwilling killer, she still manages to inspire flashes of sympathy, making the audience actually care about what happens to her — a rare occurrence in a Franco film. Unfortunately, the rest of the performances are stiff and stilted (Franco has never been known for his direction of actors). The crisp pacing bogs down in the middle with the introduction of the hero and a pair of uninteresting police

inspectors wandering around trying to figure it all out. The scenes with the police are mundane and interfere with the deliciously bizarre ambience. Though no import classic, *The Diabolical Dr. Z* is good macabre fun, and the sensual, stunning Estella Bain possessing the fingernails of death definitely holds one's interest.

Reviewed by Bryan Senn

Evil Of Dracula

(A Toho Co., Ltd. Production)

Executive Producer: Fumio Tanaka/Director: Michio Yamamoto

With Toshio Kurasawa, Kunie Tanaka, Yunosuke Ito

A mildly entertaining film with some tense moments that looks better after the second viewing.

From the moment the hero, Professor Shirako from Tokyo is picked up at the train station by a quiet sinister driver of a Mercedes, and is whisked to the exclusive girls' school for his new teaching assignment, the viewer gets the impression that Shirako should have stayed in Tokyo. Yoshio, the French teacher who drives him to the school when passing the remains of a wrecked car explains that the principal's wife a passenger in the wreck was instantly killed.

When Shirako meets the principal, who is even more sinister than Yoshio, he learns that the dead wife is in a coffin in the basement to remain there for several weeks until cremation. Shirako spends a sleepless first night and, hearing some mournful singing begins wandering about to investigate and encounters a beautiful woman who bears her fangs, so he runs away in terror. Exhausted he falls asleep and when he awakens in the morning begins to think he had a ghastly dream. After this conclusion he discovers a portrait of the woman in his "dream" and curiosity being overpowering he goes to investigate the corpse in the basement which also is the same woman. The principal, in a fury, interrupts his investigation, berating him for disturbing the corpse of his wife.

The school director, another bizarre character, tells Shirako of the regular disappearance of several students but seems nonchalant over the vanishings. The building has plenty of squeaking doors and girls who wander about the halls at night seem to encounter the principal and his "dead" wife both bearing their fangs.

Doctor Shimurai, examining the attacked girls exhibits a matter-of-fact or cavalier attitude, with the comment, "She is run down. She needs rest." A ploy to distract the principal, for he later relates some local folklore to Shirako, which indicates that he suspects what is going on. The evidence of vampire presence is so evident that the viewer will wonder why the students stick around. Perhaps they like to live dangerously.

The final scenes are exciting and frightening and the principal is a difficult vampire to eliminate.

Reviewed by Rosemary Lingua

The Flesh Eaters (1964)

Directed by Jack Curtis

With Martin Kosleck, Rita Morley, Byron Sanders, Barbara Wilkin, Ray Tudor.

Over the course of a year, most people spend more money renting movies than these folks did making this black and white oddity, but *The Flesh Eaters* still has a lot to recommend.

Grant Murdock (Sanders), pilot for hire, is contracted to take booze swilling starlet Lora Winters (Morley), and her lovely personal assistant Jan Letterman (Wilkin) to Provincetown. There's a storm blowing in, but Murdock needs the cash, despite the risk to life and limb. The plane develops engine trouble en route, and our intrepid crew has to ditch the plane on a seemingly uninhabited island.

As we all know, however, deserted islands are never totally deserted. Murdock and crew soon encounter Professor Peter Bartell (Kosleck), a skeleton on the beach, and an ocean full of glowing, flesh-

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eating organisms. The Professor is a marine biologist with a German accent and shifty eyes. He claims to know nothing about the flesh eaters, but it soon becomes apparent that he's not telling the whole story.

Director Curtis and company certainly saved big bucks on set design. With the exception of a cockpit interior and some Nazi laboratory flashbacks that look like they might have come from another film all together, there are no indoor scenes in the whole movie. Parts of Long Island are used effectively to represent a deserted island. You get the feeling, though, that if the camera were to pull back just a little farther, you might see a shopping plaza over the next sand dune.

The special effects department must have come in under budget as well. The titular cannibalistic creatures are represented by the old "scratch the film with a needle" effect, usually used for lightning bolts in no budget chillers.

Isolation is a vital element of horror, and *The Flesh Eaters* achieves this quite effectively. The island is literally surrounded by these creatures, and there appears to be no escape. Curtis manages to create a sense of claustrophobia, even though the entire film is shot outdoors. This fact, combined with taut pacing and a genuinely surprising shock ending, makes it possible to overlook the sometimes mediocre acting.

Reviewed by Matthew Bradshaw

The Haunted Palace (AIP, 1963)

With Vincent Price, Debra Paget, Lon Chaney Even after five AIP/Edgar Allan Poe films (*House Of Usher*, *Pit And The Pendulum*, *The Premature Burial*, *Tales Of Terror*, *The Raven*), Poe's box-office capacity was obviously undiminished. In early '63, the deal was set for Corman/Poe #6, *The Haunted Palace* slated to star Vincent Price, Debra Paget and Boris Karloff and expected to roll in the fall; Charles Beaumont got the screenplay assignment (along with go-aheads for *Rats in the Walls* and the oft-announced *The Dunwich Horror*). Minus Karloff, the film began shooting at Producers Studio far ahead of the initially announced date, on April 10, 1963.

Haunted Palace put the accent back on horror, making it a more traditional entry than the prior entry (the rib-tickling *Raven*). But in many ways *Palace* also represented a departure: Beaumont worked from an original not by Poe but by 20th century horror writer H.P. Lovecraft. Instead of the elegant sort of suspense found in earlier entries, *Palace* shocked audiences with its exotically lurid cauldron of unspeakable supernatural horrors, including warlocks, mutants and other-dimensional monsters. Price is the affable Charles Dexter Ward who travels with young wife Paget to the 19th century New England town of

Arkham to take possession of a home left to him by an ancestor. Surly locals advise them to be on their way, and only the town doctor (Frank Maxwell) will point out to Price his bequest, a vast palace on a hill overlooking the town. There, the glowering portrait of warlock Joseph Curwen helps the dead man's evil spirit take possession of great-great-grandson Price's mind and body, and the reborn sorcerer - abetted by assistant Lon Chaney (in the Karloff part) - begins exacting revenge on the descendants of the Arkham citizens who burned him alive 110 years before.

Haunted Palace took its title from a Poe poem, and many of the movie's other "particulars" (the cavernous castle, Price in the lead, etc.) were more reminiscent of the previous AIP/Poes than of their counterparts in the Lovecraft story "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward." But all else was distinctly "Lovecraftian" and not Poe; in fact, an inadvertent additional "swipe" at Poe was the fact that the author's name was misspelled (Edgar Allen Poe) in the opening credits! The plotty Lovecraft story gave Beaumont more to work with than Richard Matheson ever had, and Beaumont came through with a script crammed with horrific elements; the idea of monsters breeding with women to create a new race was "pushing the envelope" in 1963, as opposed to the familiar, "domestic" fright film devices (madness, premature burial, etc.) found in AIP's prior Poes.



LON CHANEY stars in American International's Edgar Allan Poe thriller, "The Haunted Palace."

Earlier Price/Poes had had their shock elements (mad Myrna Fahey in *House Of Usher*, the pendulum scene in *Pit And The Pendulum*, Price's melting corpse in *Tales Of Terror*), but the action-filled *Haunted Palace* was unique in seeking to maintain a climate of fright throughout, rather than methodically building up to climactic horror highpoints: Warlock Curwen (also played by Price) is torched by a mob of townsmen in the opening reel; disfigured mutants walk the streets of Arkham; the disinterred corpse of Curwen's mistress (Cathie Merchant) is restored to life by mystic incantations; two townsmen are burned alive; and a fish-like demon (vaguely seen) rises from a pit, presumably bent on raping the shackled Paget. Enhancing the horror is a great Ronald Stein score, perhaps the Poe series' best. The surfeit of scare tactics and horrific plot devices may in fact have been a bit excessive, and the mutant makeups had the look of a rush job, but for better or worse, the film stands apart from other, frequently too-similar entries in the series; only a slow middle third prevents it from ranking alongside some of the series' best. A Lovecraft story in a Poe setting was an invigorating change-of-pace for the series.

Price is also in good form, once again playing "two" roles (the congenial Ward and the malevolent Curwen); Curwen's crowded agenda of evil gives Price no opportunity for any of the soul-searching or shilly-shallying of the tormented protagonists of Poes

past. Presumably Roger Corman liked the picture a lot, too, since he recently semi-remade it (in Russia) as *Last Resurrection* with Ben Cross and Beverly Garland. At first the new film (about a composer possessed by the spirit of an executed satanist) was called *Haunted Symphony* but the distributor felt that sounded too much like the title of a musical film, so they changed it to something that sound too much like the title of a Biblical film.

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

The Maze (AA, 1953)

With Richard Carlson, Veronica Hurst, Katherine Emery

Of all the actors who made a "name" for themselves battling monsters in 1950s sci-fi (John Agar, Kenneth Tobey, Arthur Franz, etc.), Richard Carlson was perhaps one of the few who could shift gears and convincingly slip in a starring role in a Gothic-style horror movie. Allied Artists' *The Maze*, based on an English mystery novel by Maurice Sandoz, was the company's first 3-D production, originally scheduled to be shot in the Natural Vision system. But before cameras rolled (April 21, 1953), Allied switched over to their own newly-developed system, with Harry Neumann in charge of cinematography and William Cameron Menzies designing and directing.

Carlson was top-billed as an affable young chap whose uncle happens to be the reclusive lord of the Scottish Highland's Craven Castle. When the baronet falls ill, Carlson is summoned from his jet-set lifestyle in Cannes to the Castle (where the baronet soon dies). Carlson's fiancée Veronica Hurst senses a deep dark mystery when he later contracts her by mail, releasing her from their engagement. Accompanied by her aunt (Katherine Emery), Hurst travels to forbidding Craven Castle, where Carlson (now insufferably somber, and gray at the temples) offers the women a chilly reception and attempts to order them away. In the infamous finale, it's revealed that the actual master of the castle is Roger Philip MacTeam, born in 1750, who never physically developed past the embryonic amphibian stage (in other words, he's a man-sized frog). Roger (played by an unknown actor or stunt man) has been secretly administering the estate while descendants (like Carlson) "front" for him and hide from the world the "family disgrace."

The Maze is a peculiar hybrid of horror clichés and a (mild) SF element. For fans of traditional horror, the long, mystery-laden buildup (complete with fog, moving shadows and bumps in the night) is spoiled by the ludicrous conclusion; folks who like to laugh at movies like these probably find it rough going until the denouement. Other liabilities include Menzies' dull direction and the roundup of high-handed "idle rich" riffraff that are the film's primary characters. But the picture's status as a curio item from the '50s monster boom lends it some minor degree of appeal, as does the presence of Carlson in his most offbeat genre role. He's his usual affable self in the opening and closing scenes (the actor makes no stab at a Scottish accent) but throughout the bulk of the movie he's as coldly ominous as Menzies' bare and shadowy castle sets. His icy inhospitality is, of course, intended to drive Hurst and Emery away from the creepy castle - and any possible encounter with the tragic man-frog, who has already accidentally frightened to death a cleaning woman. While Carlson sulks (or buries his nose in a book on teratology), Hurst and Emery attempt to unravel the mystery, with all clues pointing to the Maze, an elaborate labyrinth of hedges where they climactically stumble across the monster. (Presumably William Cameron Menzies contributed to the script in addition to designing and directing: Mazes were a favorite device of the director, who set the finales of his *Chandu The Magician* (1932), *Drums In The Deep South* (1951), *Invaders From Mars* (1953) and *The Maze* in above- and below- ground labyrinths.)

The closing scene (Carlson explains Sir Roger's unique "condition") has the absurd quality of a *Saturday Night Live* skit; it is perhaps even funnier than the giant-frog-on-the-loose scene which preceded it. It's an interesting indicator of changing times that the

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frog scene, which can only be viewed as comical today, elicited shrieks from '50s audiences: *The Hollywood Reporter's* reviewer mentioned that the "hoked-up climax drew screams from a large matinee audience at the Hollywood Paramount" and, thousands of miles away, *The New York Times'* Howard H. Thompson also reported "authentic yelps from all over the house [the Palace], and small wonder." Thompson gave away the secret of *The Maze* in the opening sentence of his review, and summed it up as "a talky, meandering and old-fashioned reprise of many predecessors." He did allow that (up until the finale) the movie "does maintain a curious dignity beyond the usual pulp thriller realm," and described Hurst and Emery's candlelit scene in the *Maze* "a honey." Carlson had never seen the picture as of the time he spoke with Mark McGee for *Photon*, but mentioned, "I still get letters that mention that picture. It must have had something." Talking about Menzies, Carlson added, "He wasn't an ideal director, but he knew the camera." Menzies' castle sets, which included an unconventional flight of stairs and walled-up windows, were also the object of critics' praise; in fact, there's enough of an air of authenticity to the settings that (even though the words *MADE IN HOLLYWOOD, U.S.A.* are seen beneath the end title) many of the movie's more recent reviewers have carelessly labelled it a British production.

The Walter Mirisch production bowed in July, 1953; later that month, Allied Artists' western division sales manager was reporting that the film was doing 40-50 percent greater business in that area than that done by *The Babe Ruth Story* (1948), Allied Artists' biggest grosser to date. Even though *The Maze* was a money-maker then, it isn't often revived these days, which is unfortunate (when are the folks who own the rights to these Allied Artists movies going to start putting 'em out on pre-record?). But the saddest part of *The Maze* is the fact that all the grief and tragedy could have been so easily avoided: Instead of telling Sir Roger in childhood that he was the world's most hideous man, someone should have lied to him that he was the world's biggest, smartest frog!

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

Mr. Vampire

(Do Ho Films Co., Ltd./A Golden Harvest Distribution) In Cantonese with English subtitles
With Lam Ching Ying, Ricki Hui
Directed by Lau Koon Wai

A really first-rate horror-comedy from Hong Kong with a very capable cast, in which a vampire dug up from his grave after twenty years begins a reign of terror.

This is an incredible and entertaining mixture of martial arts, slapstick and frightening scenes that is an exciting piece of work from start to finish.

Lam and his bumbling assistants embark on the unenviable task of ridding the town of the vampire menace, encountering a sometimes hilarious series of adventures in their efforts. The trio of heroes have to battle eight hopping ghouls who have gotten out of control in a comic opening scene.

Lam, besides contending with the vampires and ghouls, is often hampered by his two incompetent assistants, handsome Chow, chemist by day and vampire hunter by night, and homely Han Choi. Chow, an egotistical lady chaser often gets his face slapped by the pretty young women for whom he has a yen.

Red ink, yellow paper, sticky rice and a wooden sword are the weapons to combat the fanged ones in this film and the potential victims must hold their breath in the vampire's presence in order not to be detected. Some interesting details crop up throughout the film.

In his nighttime search for a merchant having sticky rice in stock, fate leads the good-looking Chow into the clutches of a beautiful vampire, Jade, and the resulting seduction scene is a memorable comic affair, along with several other amusing incidents. However, the real masterpiece combination of comedy and horror occur when the master vampire hunter is arrested and jailed by an officious and offensive police director, and both along with Chow who has

come to visit his boss in jail are all confronted by the dug-up vampire who wants to socialize in his own way. The terrified guards make a hasty retreat from the jail, bolting the doors securely, thereby trapping Lam, Chow, the police official and the vampire in together. This scene is truly the highlight. Later when both assistants have been bitten by vampires, Lam comments sarcastically on his luck at having such aides in his work and has to go about curing them.

Special effects and musical theme are outstanding and the finale a riveting one. This one is an awesome experience.

Reviewed by Rosemary Lingua

Night Of The, Day Of The, Dawn Of The, Son Of The, Bride Of The, Return Of The, Revenge Of The, Terror Of The, Attack Of The, Evil Mutant, Alien, Flesh-Eating, Hellbound, Crawling, Zombified, Living Dead. Part II

The title varies slightly between the video box cover and the on screen credits, but you get the idea. That most venerable of horror classics *Night Of The Living Dead* gets the *What's Up Tiger Lily?* treatment with mixed results. The original soundtrack has been wiped out in favor of new, sometimes comedic, often politically incorrect, dialogue.

In this version of the quintessential zombie chow down flick, the walking dead are actually the over-worked working class. They're sick to death of their nowhere jobs pumping gas and working at 7-11s, and they're revolting (in every sense of the word). As in the original, our main characters are holed up in a farmhouse, but now their reason for wanting to escape is to make a pizza run.

The film drags a bit at the beginning, particularly in the scenes where Barbara and Ben are alone together, but things pick up after Tom (now talkin' like a gnarly surfin' dude) and Mr. Cooper make their entrance. This allows for a more active exchange of dialogue, some of which is genuinely funny, some of which is sophomorically stupid. There's a weird bit where the characters keep hearing a duck in the house, and Ben's gun is now Tommy the Talking Shotgun, complete with Australian accent.

The movie is periodically interrupted with short films like "Clyde Missus the Bus," "Clyde Waits for the Train Parts I and II," and a very good alternative rock music video. The short bits look like they were made by film students, and the overdubbing on the main attraction is of a similarly low budget. The whole package feels like an underground version of *Mystery Science Theatre 3000*.

Purists may take offense at this lampooning of one of the greats of the horror genre, but it's all in good fun. Even the makers of this film apologize to George Romero no less than three times throughout *Night Of The...*, indicating that they have a certain reverence for the film they are demolishing. Not all of the jokes work, but there are some genuine belly laughs to be had here. That alone makes it worth a look.

Reviewed by Matthew Bradshaw

The Monster Of Piedras Blancas (1958)

Republic Pictures Home Video
Directed by Irvin Berwick

With Les Tremayne, Forrest Lewis, John Harmon, Jeanne Carmen, Don Sullivan, and Frank Arvidson.

The box cover actually dares to compare this film with *Creature From The Black Lagoon*. Well, both movies do feature men in rubber monster suits, and they are both in black and white, but that's where the similarity ends. While *Creature* has become a classic for its genuine chills, *The Monster Of Piedras Blancas* should just as easily be forgotten for its yawn inducing predictability.

Two bodies are found in a small fishing village, both with their heads severed. The authorities are baffled, but Kolchek the storekeeper (Arvidson) blames the deaths on the legendary, titular creature. Legend has it that the monster used to feed on the remains of shipwreck victims, but now that there's a

lighthouse, shipwrecks are few and far between.

The lighthouse keeper (Harmon) has been leaving meat scraps for the monster for years. One day, when he is unable to feed the critter, the keeper begins to worry for the safety of the locals, particularly his daughter Lucy (Carmen). His fears are soon justified, as the monster's decapitated victims begin to pile up.

Fortunately Lucy's boyfriend Fred (Lewis) is a biologist, and when one of the creature's scales is left at one of the murder sites, Fred is able to piece together a pseudo-scientific explanation for the monster's existence. Yes, folks, we've once again found the missing link.

The movie quickly degenerates into a generic monster hunt with the only real surprise being some particularly graphic severed heads. The monster itself is still and unnatural looking. The pathetic *Octaman* would seem to be a more appropriate subject for comparison than the classic *Creature*.

Reviewed by Matthew Bradshaw

Pyro (AIP, 1964)

With Barry Sullivan, Martha Hyer, Sherry Moreland
The made-in-Spain *Pyro*, a precursor of the new school of "psychotic-women-scorned" movies (*Fatal Attraction*, etc.), had a good basic idea buried somewhere amidst too many reels of slow-poke story development. Barry Sullivan stars as an engineer who moves to Spain with his wife (Sherry Moreland) and young daughter to start construction on a new dam; hunting for a house, he happens upon one whose owner (Hyer) is in the process of preparing to torch it for insurance money. Instead of burning the house, the man-hungry Hyer (in original costumes and dresses designed by "Mitou of Madrid") sinks her predatory hooks into Sullivan. When after several months of violent passion the conscience-stricken Sullivan returns to his suffering wife, Hyer - still "carrying the torch" - carries it to Sullivan's home and sets it alight. The wife and child are burned to death and Sullivan, who rushed into the inferno to save them, receives fourth-degree burns. "Our big problem is that he's still alive," says one doctor, aghast at the extent of Sullivan's horrifying injuries (unseen - he's wrapped in bandages and resembles Klaris from *Abbott And Costello Meet The Mummy*). Now at the halfway point, things begin to porcolate when the bedridden Sullivan gasps out a chilling threat to the visiting Hyer: "I'll survive to be your death. The only reason I stay alive is to pay you back. ...I won't rest until you and all of your family are dead."

What ought to have been a lurid, fast-paced variant on (better) films like *House Of Wax* and *Face Of Fire*, *Pyro* takes its time building to its basic thrust (the revenge angle); seems full of potential for a few midpoint minutes; then drifts down (again) into the talky depths. Vanishing from the hospital, Sullivan (now made-up to look like a cross between himself and Lee Van Cleef) travels with a carnival as a Ferris wheel repairman as he hunts for Hyer. One by one he incinerates Hyer's family (cop: "The important thing to do is to deprive him of his lighter!") and climactically tracks her down to her seaside hideaway; in the time-honored Mary Philbin/Susanna Foster/Fay Wray/Phyllis Kirk tradition, she shrieks at his hideous "face behind the mask" (which comes as no surprise to the audience). Sullivan knocks her out, sets a fatal fire and carries Hyer's small daughter back to the carnival where he intends to toss her from the top of the Ferris wheel.

The Panacolor picture, co-written and -produced by Sidney W. Pink, held plenty of possibilities that aren't fully exploited. Name actors Sullivan and Hyer give Pink's movie a touch of legitimacy despite the grisly plot, and the overseas backdrop is a nice, welcome touch of exotica; but 99 minutes is a long distance over which to spread such an elementary storyline, even with these other advantages. (And why, knowing that police are hunting for him, does Sullivan create for himself a mask that looks just like his old face?) The movie calls for Hyer to ensnare Sullivan within a few minutes of their first meeting,

(continued)

which probably looked silly on paper, but gorgeous Hyer with her carnal, come-hither looks, lounging around invitingly in leather pants, makes Sullivan's out-of-left-field ardor not just plausible but believable; she's every inch the "dangerous plaything" another character describes her as. (In another sleazy touch – this one a "throwaway" – Hyer tells Sullivan that her father and the father of her little girl are the same man.) Hyer is also convincingly deadly as she arranges her various Rube Goldberg-esque fire traps, shown in such loving detail they could serve as a "how-to" guide for the wannabe firebug. Since her wanton pendants for pyro- and nymphomania make her the movie's villain (of course), Sullivan's second-half search is not suspense-filled as the picturemakers intended; the audience has been made to feel that she's earned what's coming, Sullivan's manic qualities notwithstanding. (When Pink announced the movie in 1961, long before he actually made it, he intended for Vincent Price to star.)

Pink wrote extensively about *Pyro* in his autobiography *So You Want To Make Movies – My Life As An Independent Film Producer*. His story outline was called *Phantom of the Ferris Wheel* and it was whipped into shape as a script by Luis de los Arcos (Pink later rewrote again). Prize-winning director Julio Coll agreed to direct for \$7,500 and Pink lined up Sullivan and Hyer during a trip back to the States (Hyer accepting the part over the objections of her producer-husband Hal B. Wallis). The movie, shot on novel locations throughout Spain, progressed congenially for several weeks, but when shooting shifted to Madrid, director Coll's true colors came through; "He became rude and opinionated," according to Pink. "In face, he was downright abusive to Martha Hyer and constantly belittled her on the set. One day he went too far and she burst into tears. ...Although Julio Coll turned out to be a bastard, I must admit he did a good job on what he shot" (before Pink allowed him to leave the as-yet-uncompleted picture). Coll's assistant Luis Garcia finished the job.

In the U.S. the movie was distributed by AIP as *Pyro* (Jim Nicholson disliked, and changed, Pink's title *Phantom of the Ferris Wheel*). The critics roasted it.

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

Macumba Love (AA, 1960)

With Walter Reed, Ziva Rodann, June Wilkinson. Anyone who doesn't believe in voodoo curses ought to take a stab at explaining why just about every movie about 'em turns out to be a bomb – almost beyond the laws of chance. One of the most notorious of the bunch, *Macumba Love* (1960) was a Brazilian-made "voodoo adventure" directed by actor Douglas Fowley, then a regular on TV's *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp* (playing Doc Holliday). In the color feature (financed by drive-in operator M.A. Riggs and Steve Barday), Walter Reed plays Weils, an American novelist, lecturer and "general debunker of mankind" who has turned his investigative eye on the voodoo rites being performed on a small island off the coast of South America. Not averse to mixing business with pleasure, the widower romances Ziva Rodann, a much-married playgirl and resident of the island, and entertains his honeymooning daughter (Playboy model June Wilkinson) and her new husband (William Wellman, Jr.). Voodoo queen Ruth De Souza makes it clear to Reed that he's putting his life on the line nosing around in the natives' religious affairs; underlining the threat, a once-every-ten-years series of voodoo-related murders re-commences. But Reed is still undeterred ("My life has been riddled with danger for the last 20 years, I thrive on it!"), forcing the voodoo practitioners to kidnap Wellman, Jr. In the finale, Rodann, subjected to drugs and hypnosis, is under the voodoo priestess' influence and is about to kill Wellman with a poisoned hatpin in a jungle ceremony (with a helpless Reed looking on).

William Wellman, who directed Reed and Douglas Fowley in *The High And The Mighty* (1954), suggested Reed for the lead role in *Macumba Love* when Fowley came to him for advice. The movie itself was generally a dull affair, stretched out to a hard-to-take



86 minutes with the inclusion of endless scenes of voodoo rituals, jungle jiggy-pokery, subplots (Rodann puts on the lure for Wellman, Jr.) and even a number of songs. Annoyingly, the film offers hints that Rodann will change into a monster (the spirit of Damballah is said to enter the body of a woman every 10 years, transforming her into a half-reptile) but then doesn't deliver; Rodann merely dances and wields the deadly hatpin in the climactic voodoo rite. There were some gruesome touches along the way (for instance, a scene of De Souza plunging a hatpin into the eye of a captive) to dispel the stagnant air of dullness, but not enough to keep the critics' knives sheathed. (Joe Morgenstern of *The New York Herald Tribune* called it a "sleazy little horror story...eighty-six minutes of senseless violence and Neanderthal dialogue.") But, just this once, audiences were apparently not put off by all the bad reviews: The United Artists release rolled up an impressive \$5455 ticket window total in its world premiere at Detroit's Palms Theatre, and the dollar figure was up to a smash \$29,314 at the end of its first week there. According to Reed, it eventually grossed \$3,000,000 in the U.S., making him wish that he'd accepted the filmmakers' offer of 5 percent of the gross in lieu of a salary.

In August, 1960, *Macumba Love* was one-quarter of a "four-barrelled horror show" at the Granada Theatre in Oakland, California (the other three were *I Married A Monster From Outer Space*, *The Cosmic Man*

and Vincent Price's *The Bat*). Halfway through the final feature, the audience was making so much noise that the manager stopped the show and ordered them to leave. Approximately 300 teenagers rioted. Twenty policemen rushed to the scene and made three arrests, but not before \$500 worth of damage had been done. Considering what three of those four movies are like, the kids probably presented a good defense in court.

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

The Strangler (AA, 1964)

With Victor Buono, Davey Davison, Ellen Corby. By the mid-'60s, critics and audiences had already started comparing Victor Buono, the blubbery movie and TV villain, and Laird Cregar, who (over)filled the same sort of casting slot a generation before; the parallels were underlined when Buono starred in *The Strangler* (1964), an updated spin on Cregar's classic "lady-killer" chillers *Hangover Square* (1945) and (especially) *The Lodger* (1944). While *The Strangler* is set in modern-day America and has a pseudo-psychological approach (as opposed to *The Lodger*'s gaslit London backdrop), the physical similarities between Cregar (who played Jack the Ripper) and Buono (playing a Boston Strangler-ish sex maniac) and between some of the scare tactics employed by the movies made comparisons irresistible.

The Allied Artists release makes a token stab at respectability when, even before the credits roll, a written foreword thanks the police departments of some of the major U.S. cities for permitting the moviemakers to examine their files. But heard over the foreword is a heartbeat, creating an ominous effect, and the movie's first shot is that of a woman (Sellette Cole) undressing – a scene "reflected" (matted into) the center of one of Buono's wide, staring eyes; the movie's real intent is to titillate and to raise goosebumps, no to present the promised "clinical" depiction of a homicidal "split personality." Cole, of course, is not long for this film (stepping out of his closet hiding place, Buono garrotes her with one of her own stockings); later, at home, he undresses a toy doll (complete with sheer stockings) and locks the "naked" toy in a drawer with seven others. By day, the schizophrenic Buono is a placid, condescending chemist at a hospital but by night the mother-obsessed maniac murders young nurses – nurses like the ones that are keeping his own mom, coronary case Ellen Corby, alive and well and sniping at her clubber-boy son at a local sanatorium. ("Now, face facts, son – you're not good-looking, you're fat. ...Even as a little boy, nobody liked you – and, except for me, nobody's loved you.") After killing Corby's nurse (Jeanne Bates) and taunting Corby into a fatal heart attack with the news of Bates' death, Buono summons up the courage to propose marriage to a funhouse ring-toss girl (Davey Davison) with whom he is smitten (and whose friend Diane Sayer he has also strangled). When Davison rejects him, Buono snaps again, finds her apartment, waits for her and attempts to choke her. But police on Buono's trail burst in and treat the psychopath to a bit of on-the-spot justice, shooting him so that he tumbles out through a high window.

The Strangler was first announced (as *The Boston Strangler*) in spring, 1963, when the lurid real-life case was making headlines and the murderer was still at large. (At that point, 11 of the eventual 13 killings had taken place.) Buono was set to star and the producers, Samuel Bischoff and David Diamond, planned to shoot the movie in Boston with the full cooperation of the Boston Police Department, on the actual locations where the killings were committed. (Bischoff and Diamond's earlier *The Phenix City Story* [1955] was also based on the true story of a terrorized community.) The idea of Boston shooting was later scrapped and the film, which never specifies its locale, went into production at Paramount as *The Strangler* on Friday the 13th of September, 1963. Buono was stricken with bronchial pneumonia the next day and recuperated in the Westside Hospital while director Burt Topper shot around him.

Buono created other delays during production: A

practicing Christian, he objected to the idea of "strangling" nearly-nude women in the film. The shower-murder of Diane Sayer precipitated a run-in between star and director, according to cinematographer Jacques Marquette. In the climax, Davey Davison (a 22-year-old TV veteran, here making her feature debut) was to wear nothing but scanties, but Buono insisted that she don a robe. Bischoff and Diamond argued for "realism" — the eleven women killed (so far) by the Boston Strangler were almost nude. Buono stalked off and did not return until his bosses gave in.

"They had to give in that time, because I was holding up production — it was costing them money," Buono told an interviewer. "And I don't think they've really forgiven me yet. But that argument was nothing compared to some we had before production began. I made them eliminate some other scenes from the script entirely. I'm not a prude, and I think the proof is in the picture. I'm still a sex maniac in it, you know. But it always depends on how you do a thing like that. And there were some things at which I had to draw the line in sheer conscience. Of course I don't think I would have got away with it if it hadn't been for that Academy Award nomination [for *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?*]. Even aside from the billings and the money, it's wonderful what one of those will do for you. But they're not guaranteed. I've lost several good parts outright because the producers couldn't see things my way, and I expect to lose more."

The *Strangler* wrapped on October 7 and was released by Allied Artists in April of '64. The 89 minute thriller got a mixed critical reception, having probably alienated some critics who disapproved of the exploitation of the real-life tragedies; Buono's performance, rather than any aspects of the film's semi-realistic, matter-of-fact presentation, was at the center of most reviews.

Albert DeSalvo later confessed to the Boston killings-ropes, but there was not sufficient evidence to indict him; he was sentenced to life imprisonment for robbing and assaulting four women who lived to testify against him. But psychiatrist Dr. Ames Robey, who was the director of the Bridgewater State Hospital in 1965 when DeSalvo (a patient there) confessed to the crimes, isn't convinced that only one killer was responsible for the 13 strangulations, and says that DeSalvo "very much wanted the notoriety." Ex-New York police detective Thomas Cavanagh, the inspiration for the *Kojak* TV series, still maintains that New York killer Charles E. Terry (who died in 1981) committed four to six of the Boston stranglings. Forensics psychologist John Spencer maintains that there were several stranglers and that DeSalvo was probably responsible for only one or two of the 13 killings. DeSalvo was stabbed to death in his Walpole, Massachusetts, prison cell in November, 1973.

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

Hercules, Samson & Ulysses

(1963, Directed by Pietro Francisci. Starring Kirk Morris as Hercules and Richard Lloyd as Samson. With Enzo Cerusico, Liana Orfei, Fulvio Franco, Aldo Giuffrè.)

In this film Mistaken identities abound as the paths of Hercules and Samson cross and tempers flare.

You have to hang in there for a little while — this is not the most engrossing entry in the series, but half way through you get the best fight scene that the genre has to offer. The battle between Hercules and

THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST STRONGMEN IN A CONTEST OF SUPERHUMAN FORCE!



Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
presents

KIRK MORRIS
RICHARD LLOYD
LIANA ORFEI

ENZO CERUSICO

HERCULES, SAMSON AND ULYSSES



EASTMAN
COLOR

directed by PIETRO FRANCISCI • produced by JOSEPH FRYD

Samson in the ruined city is fantastic. The action is spectacular and the effect on the city they destroy is astounding. The two men just don't throw each other around; they're thrown into pillars that fall apart, statues that crash into them and walls that crumble. It's outlandish without being stupid, and fun without being comical. The budget for styrofoam must have been the major cash output for the film. The plot is basic in the extreme. The acting is fine with two great beefcakes, even if you do think you're getting three because of the title.

Something to watch for, after the fight, is how few scenes the two heroes do with any other characters. From that point on, most shots with the two of them are just that; the two of them and no one else. There are scenes with Hercules and his friends and Samson and his people but when the two men team up, no one else is in the shot with them. Even though there are numerous similarities, this is not a follow up to *Hercules Unchained*. At least it's not an official sequel. They have been able to bend the public domain envelope just enough so that their Hercules is married to a woman named Yolea and gotten away with it.

Kirk Morris would continue to give the most consistent performances of all the stars of these films. Here he's wearing a beard and his hair has been dyed a light blondeish brown. The beard makes him look much older than in his other appearances. It's very effective in making him fit the character.

Richard Lloyd as Samson, has only a supporting role here before getting the lead in *The Invincible Gladiators*. It's too bad he didn't get to star in more films on his own since his build is incredible. He seems to be stockier than some of the other stars but his chest is certainly one of the largest in the series.

There is a sea monster in this film, but all attempts to finally determine just what it is are avoided. The film is dark and most shots of the monster are quick. In what you do see, it appears to be a real animal, but what animal is hard to tell. Sometimes it looks like a seal or a hippo but it's all old stock footage; there are no real special effects.

Reviewed by Stephen Flacassier

The Bizarre Ones

(Written & directed by Ron Sullivan. Starring Claire Eclair, Tracy Lee, Judy Caine, Sagg Taras)

Trancer narration starts *The Bizarre Ones* off. A slouchy mid 1960's swinger in hippie gear tells us that she's the type "you sometimes hear or read about...but never meet." Thank the gods for that! Though she claims anything turns her on, it's obvious that she primarily enjoys humiliating and raping both sexes.

She picks up a male hitch hiker, then chains and rapes him, pretending that it's a game. She binds him and takes him to a "swingers" party where other whacked out characters in "hippie" gear are holding a woman hostage, tied to a cross and covered in drip-melted wax and nothing else. This turns our super-swinger on; she then takes the hostage for her own and proceeds to torture/delight the poor sow with a very thick candle.

Our hitch hiker is teased and pleased by other female swingers while he is still bound and blind folded; another woman volunteers to try out the sex machine invented by one of the male swingers. She likes it, she likes it!

Played for suckers and laughs, *The Bizarre Ones* still conveys the darker side of the '60's swinger era...the super-swinger

gets her come-uppance, tied nude to the roof of a VW and driven around like a hunters' trophy. The swingers go after the ultimate kick — murder.

The effect is mock expressionistic, put-on surrealism and somewhat hostile. It makes no pretence of telling a story, rather it delineates a time and place out of the mainstream, and is wicked fun from start to finish. Frank Hennenlotter likes this film. It's a cheeky entry in the Distribix series available from Something Weird Video.

Reviewed by Robb Rucker

Gore Whore

(1994, Written & directed by Hugh Gallagher. With Brad DeBussy, D'Lana Tunnell, Woody Latrell, Sherry Lynn Garri and Audrey Street.)

Under the toasted-titles we see 50's bondage photos and we know right away this is Hugh Gallagher territory. Gallagher, publisher emeritus with many magazines dedicated to cult cinema under his belt, creator of "Draculina" character and magazine, finishes off his unplanned but ever-evolving trilogy of

(continued)

direct to tape terror with *Gore Whore*.

The story wastes no time getting underway, with Dawn, the Undead Hooker, bringing home the "pork", a john, whom she entices titillates, then castrates. There's terror and lewd moments galore in this tale of the semi-films.

I am a fan of the direct-to-tape indie genre and Gallagher, along with J. R. Bookwalter are among the best practitioners of the form. Technically proficient, Hugh Gallagher, creates a complete vision of apocalyptic madness in this film, along with his earlier *Gorgasm* and *Gorotia*. This latest effort seems to be Gallagher's bid to a mallish, mainstream product, but done with his oeuvre still in mind. Audrey Street plays Dawn, another in a line of Gallagher's demonatrixes. It is an accurate and chilling performance and the best in a Gallagher film so far. Brad DeBussy gives a very astute reading of Chase Barr, a character very akin to the Chase Nicholl character in *Gorgasm*. This is a great job, much more compelling than many multi-plex mish-mash attempts at horror as of late. Contact Hugh Gallagher at P. O. Box 969, Centralia, IL 62801, for more details.

Reviewed by Robb Rucker

My Son, The Hero

(1963, Directed by Duccio Tessari. Starring Giuliano Gemma as Creass and Serge Nubret as Gratto. With Antonella Lualdi, Pedro Armendariz, Jacqueline Sassari, Tanya Lopert, Ingrida Scadiler)

Giuliano Gemma stars as Creass, who is sent to assure a King's destiny but winds up becoming part of it.

The best way to review this film is to look at some other reviews of it. Just about everything that has been written about this film seems to have been taken solely from one or two previous reviews, rewritten and changed a little to make it new, and then printed without any facts being checked. Let's see if we can clear up a few things.

First, this is not a Hercules version of Woody Allen's *What's Up Tiger Lily?* It is not a serious film that was tampered with by American producers to make the dialogue and action seem hilarious. The dialogue in the film does fit how the actors are moving their lips, at least as well as in any of these films, and it supports what was intended. It is supposed to be a comedy of sorts, so sometimes what comes out is a little funny; and while it may not be as funny as was hoped for, it is what the filmmakers had in mind.

Second, no one speaks in a mocking Jewish accent to get laughs, as claimed in several books. Even Leonard Maltin's book of reviews furthers this mistake. It's the same bland middle American dubbing voices you get in all these pictures.

Giuliano Gemma graduates up to lead hero here, after a supporting role in *Hercules Against The Sons Of The Sun*. It's very hard to tell that it's the same person though. In *Sons Of The Sun*, Gemma plays an Inca leader with jet black hair and very dark brown skin on a superior build. Here, he's blonde with very light skin and a build that's half of what it was in the previous movie. He's also able to show off his gymnastic skills more than his body. Through all the hair dying and wigs, body makeup and styling, there is one way to tell that this is the same actor as in *Sons Of The Sun*, no matter how much they seem to change him. While Gemma might not have had the biggest build of all these films stars, frankly he had the biggest nipples. They're the size of an average donut, and being embarrassed enough for bringing it up, I'm going to leave it there. While this was Gemma's last movie in the genre, he would continue on into the new craze of "Spaghetti Westerns" being made in Italy. Gemma would make a bigger name for himself in those films than he ever could have in this series. Some he would make using the name "Montgomery Wood," but Giuliano Gemma was apparently his real name.

What can be said about Serge Nubret and the build that won him just about every major award at the time. He's got the most defined build of just about any actor in a Hercules film but besides *The Tyrant Of Lydia Against The Son Of Hercules* you're not going to

see it again. He seems to handle his acting as well as the other stars and should have been given better roles. Watch for the scenes where he's running around the Gorgon's island. When he stops to talk, it's not that you can see his breath, it's that it comes out in jets of steam that looks like he's got a fire extinguisher shoved down his throat, it's that cold outside. Considering just how little he had on, the man must have been cold indeed.

There isn't much to the Gorgon, but if you look close, those are real snakes in the woman's head. She also looks pretty cold from the steam coming out of her mouth so maybe the snakes were sleeping most of the time they sat around on her head. The cyclops is on for only a couple of minutes and is played mostly for laughs. The makeup is very close to the one used in *The Three Stooges Meet Hercules*, but how many ways can you do a cyclops on a budget?

Reviewed by Stephen Flacassier

Japanese Spiderman

(1978) This is not a feature film but a video collection of 4 episodes. (From Masked Maniacs video; see their ad elsewhere in this issue.) Fans of this legendary American comic book hero, or of the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers should be interested in viewing this tape. Produced by Toei Studios in 1978 around the same time as the US version which starred Nicholas Hammond was airing on TV stateside, this Japanese version is nothing like the original American show. The producers of Japan's Toei Studios may have seen the American show and comic books, but they must have thrown them away. Spiderman still looks like Spiderman, climbs walls and shoots webbing, but the rest is all new! Forget Peter Parker! Spiderman is now some Japanese guy (Hirosuke Kayama) who is drawn to a cave where a sage old man gives him a wrist-band which injects him with a chemical that awakens his hidden "Spider-Powers." It turns out that this Spidey guy is a descendant of an ancient race of spider warriors and now must battle against some evil space aliens and their horde of mutants. To aid our arachnid hero, Spiderman has a car called "Spider-Machine GP7" which can fly through the air and turn into a giant Transformer robot so Spidey can duke it out with the monster of the week who always grows gigantic size.

You don't need to speak any Japanese to understand this kind of programming. It's better to watch the originals than some hacked up shows where just the Japanese Superhero and FX scenes are used and the original cast is edited out and replaced by "Saved By The Bell" Hollywood teens on current TV shows like "Superhuman Samurai Syber Squad" (originally "Lightning Superhuman Gridman", 1993 Tsuburaya Productions). Are American producers racist pigs? If American distributors finally release the currently unreleased 4 Godzilla films, will they also be missing their original casts? Hopefully not! Until then, take a chance on the "real stuff" and watch Japanese Spiderman as it was meant to be seen. (From Masked Maniacs Video)

Reviewed by Raven White

Scope-A-Tones

Just a bit like the soundies and the telescriptions of days gone by, the scope-a-tones took music to a visual level and allowed mid-1960's fans a chance to see & hear their favorite musicians in full color, all for a dime. The machines proliferated in eateries in France, just as the juke-boxes did, and thus the musical numbers were largely recorded in French. All but forgotten for nearly 30 years, these little marvels have been re-discovered and are available now on VHS here in America for the first time (see ad in this issue).

The producers of these short, record length marvels were at least ten years ahead of their time, since there was nothing like them being done in America, and it even took MTV a few years of experimentation to get to the level of the scope-a-tones. It's fun to hear popular tunes such as the theme from *Goldfinger*, being played and sung in French by artists who are

essentially unknown to us. Direct from the original 16mm films with magnetic sound, this one hour collection of scope-a-tone numbers is ground breaking new material for the film fan who thinks he's seen everything.

Reviewed by Korla Pandit

Cartoon Carnival

This is a collection of opening and closing numbers from several generations worth of cartoon shows, available from our friends at Network Enterprises (see their ad in this issue.) It's like a magic carpet ride back to my childhood, seeing Johnny Quest, Secret Squirrel, Tom Terrific, and many others. I always remembered having seen Bullwinkle Moose as a hand puppet, as well as a cartoon, yet no one else seemed to recall such a thing. Well here is some footage of that after at least 35 years, and it certainly is a relief to know that I wasn't dreaming the whole thing up! Also, it's good to see the original open & close sequences to *The Flintstones*, with different action and music than we've been used to since 1962. When Fred Flintstone sits down, lights up a smoke and turns to the camera telling us, "Winston tastes good, like a cigarette should!" we know this wasn't strictly something for the kiddies. Excellent viewing! Send for the catalog from Network.

Reviewed by Conrad Brooks

Yongary - Monster From The Deep

Yongary - Monster From The Deep (1967), a film released in South Korea by the Kuk Dong Motion Picture Company Limited, is very much like *Gappa - The Triphibian Monster* (1967), *The X From Outer Space* (1967) and a number of the other giant monster movies which were released in Japan during the late 1960s.

At the beginning of the film, a young boy uses a device that causes insatiable itching on his newly wedded sister and her husband. This apparently pointless prank is made relevant when the device is used on Yongary, but the idea is so absurd that one can't help but think that *Yongary - Monsier From The Deep* would have been better if the idea had not been used.

Before the existence of Yongary is established, a man with a bloody face bursts into a meeting of military leaders to hand them a camera containing an undeveloped photograph of the monster. The shot of the man's face is fairly graphic, and it therefore seems out of place in a movie that so obviously is intended to appeal to children.

Shortly after it is announced that Yongary is approaching Seoul, director Kim Kiduck shows how different people react to the news. Most flee for their lives, but some choose to get drunk and dance in a rock club, a few gorge themselves on food, and one person makes his way through the streets telling everyone they must repent.

The acting in *Yongary - Monster From The Deep* generally is adequate, but little more.

The special effects show that the amount of money spent on making the film was not a large one. The miniature sets are limited in size and the pyrotechnics are kept to a minimum.

There can be no doubt that Yongary was based on Godzilla. Like the "king of the monsters," he has a row of plates on his back and he breathes fire.

Chun Chungkun's score is a very suspenseful one, but it is a little too sparse and a little too repetitive.

The dubbing done for the American version of *Yongary - Monster From The Deep* is surprisingly good. There are very few points at which a person's mouth is seen moving but nothing is being said. However, some of the dubbing was done by people with heavy European accents, and this makes it all too obvious that what is being heard is not what is actually being said.

Although Orion Home Video released *Yongary - Monster From The Deep* by itself on VHS tape, the company released it on laserdisc only as part of a double disc set which also includes *The X From Outer Space*.

Reviewed by David Milner

The Weekend Warriors

At the October 1992 *Chiller* convention in Hackensack, NJ, I obtained a copy of the pressbook and campaign formula for *The Weekend Warriors*, a color, 90 minute drag racing documentary released in 1966 and targeted for the then-thriving drive-in market. It was the lone screen credit for Champion Films (of Toledo, OH) and excepting a brief entry in the *American Film Institute Catalog*, *Feature Films, 1961-1970* (wherein its release date is listed as 11/66), it isn't in any film guides.

Careful examination of every issue of *Variety* from 1965-67 produced a brief trade notice "Ohio Theatremen Hit Market With Own Pic On Auto Races" (1/25/67), along with a boxoffice statement from Cincinnati's Twin Drive-In (9/27/67) where it was billed above *The Brides Of Fu Manchu*, earning a relatively tame \$3,500 (on the other screen, *The Undertaker And His Pals* raked in \$9,500, with an additional \$5,000 the following week).

The *Weekend Warriors* was produced by the triumvirate of James Dempsey, the vice president of General Theatres in Cleveland (the film was his idea); Leonard Mishkin, General's president (he put up almost all of the \$200,000 budget); and Sol Gordon, General's treasurer/sales manager. Twenty-seven years later, Dempsey is deceased, Gordon resides in California, and Mishkin still controls General Theatres. Over the phone, he related that the film was well-made (considering the budget) and while it was warmly received by racing fans, it ultimately lacked the broad base of appeal necessary in attracting a wider audience. Following its initial release the film was shelved, and today nobody is certain of where the negative is, or if any 35mm prints have survived (all evidence indicates that there were 25 struck). Unfortunately, Jim Dempsey was the one person who could have shed valuable light on the film's origination and subsequent filming and with his passing, so went the major portion of the untold story regarding *The Weekend Warriors*.

Addressing the lay person as well as the hard-core drag racing fan, it comes as no surprise that the first half of *The Weekend Warriors* has educational overtones reminiscent of classroom films of the era. The picture opens at Raceway Park, in Indianapolis, IN, with the 1964 NHRA Nationals (now the U.S. Nationals), the oldest major event in drag racing. Cars are rolled off trailers, inspected, weighed and staged in preparation for their quarter-mile passes as the (uncredited) narrator explains the ritual. After that it's vintage side-by-side racing, with legendary cars and drivers in unrelenting repetition. Top Gas pilot (and Portsmouth, OH native) Gordon Collett recorded his first big-event win at this race and proceeded to make personal appearances at select Midwest drive-ins (with his rail dragster!) to promote the film. The action then shifts to Beeline Dragway, near Phoenix, AZ, for the 1965 AHRA Winter Championships and it concludes with the '65 Winternationals at Pomona, CA (with footage from a California custom car show thrown in for good measure). With its lingering shots of fans donning "dunce" caps (made popular by car customizer/pinstriper/tee-shirt artist, Ed "Big Daddy" Roth); crews resplendent in their "Schneider Racing Cam" tee-shirts (with the trademark Maltese Cross logo); "STP" stickers and regalia seemingly everywhere; some of the same stock library music heard in Herschell Gordon Lewis' *Color Me Blood Red*; and as one of the ad mats states; "the girls of the track" (including several shots featuring capri-clad spectators "walking-out-of-the-lens" ala Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*), *The Weekend Warriors* encapsulates a segment of sixties (sub)culture and partially succeeds in transcending the genre of auto racing documentary (as is invariably aired on cable channel filler spots). This rarity is currently unavailable on video, but one day the truly obsessed will perhaps get the opportunity to fill that forgotten medicinal vaporizer with raw nitromethane, light the rubber incense, filter some burned clutch dust through the air conditioner/window fan/heating duct and "dig-in & dig-out" with a true one-shot, drive-in wonder!

(*Cult Movies* thanks Leonard L. Mishkin for the



gracious loan of his excellent 16mm reduction print of *The Weekend Warriors*.)

reviewed by Terrance Jennings Wharton

The Man Who Could Cheat Death

(Paramount, 1959)

With Anton Diffring, Hazel Court, Christopher Lee

In their own day, the Hammer horrors were panned by reviewers dismayed by the blood, violence and sex, but defended by fans who pointed to other elements as praiseworthy (use of color, nice sets, "veddy British" thesping, a veneer of literacy). Today, of course, Hammer's array of visual horrors and once-steamy sexual situations seem quaint when measured against the new R-rated gore-fests, and these same Hammerheads continue to noisily point to the "other elements" in their ongoing, no-win battle to earn their pet movies a bit of mainstream acceptance. So why is *The Man Who Could Cheat Death*, a 1959 Hammer with all of the "other" qualities (but almost none of the nasty violence and sexual suggestiveness), a movie which even the most devout Hammerheads have given the cold shoulder?

Like most of the Hammer horrors, *Man Who Could Cheat Death* had as its basis a tried-and-true story property, in this case Barre Lyndon's play *The Man In Half Moon Street*. Paramount owned the screen rights, having produced a 1944 film by that title, and were partnered with Hammer in this new go-through (titled *The Man in the Rue Noir* throughout production). Here, with 1890 Paris as the setting, it's Anton Diffring as the ageless doctor, who looks 35 (according to dialogue; Diffring was 40-ish) at 104. Every ten years a gland transplant is required in order to keep Diffring's Georges Bonner character young and immune from disease, but his partner Arnold Marle (who, unaccountably, has not chosen to remain young) is now too infirm to perform the necessary surgery—and has also finally realized that Diffring murders to obtain each replacement gland. Added complications include Diffring's love life (his sensuous girlfriend Court, who can't keep her hands to herself), the suspicions of a fellow doctor (Christopher Lee) and a police inspector (Francis De Wolff), and the fact that a horrible death by rapid aging is looming quickly for Diffring.

There were few opportunities in Lyndon's old chestnut which weren't tapped by Paramount's 1944 Nils Asther-starrer, and perhaps just this one time Hammer's proclivity for out-of-left-field sleaze might have livened up a fairly staid story, rather than merely cheapened it. But *Man Who Could Cheat Death* is content to remain a talky character study, its stage origins underlined by Terence Fisher's pedestrian direction. Long stretches of dialogue are captured in boring master shots, with cost-conscious Fisher coming in for closer shots generally late in the scene—presumably only after one of the players has finally forgotten or blown a line. Adding to the stuffy atmosphere of a filmed play is the movie's setbound proclivity (we almost never leave Diffring's house) and

Arnold Marle's stagy, hammy portrayal of the older scientist.

Diffring, an excellent actor within his range, appears to give his best to the title role but is unable to evoke any sympathy, handicapped not only by Jimmy Sangster's script which presents him as the epitome of ruthlessness, but also by his own frosty, Germanic screen personality. (Peter Cushing, initially pencilled in for the role, might have made for a more tragic Bonner.) Court, too, comes across unsympathetically playing a self-interested conniver, unrepentantly dumping one bland suitor (Lee) for another (Diffring), and hardheadedly disregarding all clues which point toward danger. She is topless (seen from the back, and otherwise wrapped in a sheet) in one scene where Diffring is sculpting her statue (British and U.S. prints) but for a version shot for other markets where screen nakedness was permissible, she allowed herself to be photographed in the nude.

Man Who Could Cheat Death was met with hostile reviews pretty much across the board, but few were as scathing as the ones it got in its native country. *The London Observer* called the would-be chiller "another feeble, cliché-ridden film...I felt sorry for everyone concerned; what dreary, lifeless work the concoction of these horror pictures must be!" *The Evening Standard* was in accord: "Can no one kill off this apparently immortal plot?" *The Evening News* contributed this wreath: "Lots of ugly scenes in full colour and dialogue that I can only suppose is intentionally funny." *The Star* put it all in a nutshell: "It put years on me."

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

You'll love reading the thrilling book-length biography on George Reeves included in the next exciting issue of *Cult Movies*.



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**Hollywood strippers!
Chi Chi's Nite Out**

Titus was a contributing editor for Adam's Gentleman's Quarterly for many years and at his side and always ready to pose with the willing and seductive models was loyal sidekick Chi Chi, the world's luckiest dog! Now Chi Chi hosts this incredible journey through the underbelly of Los Angeles adult entertainment.



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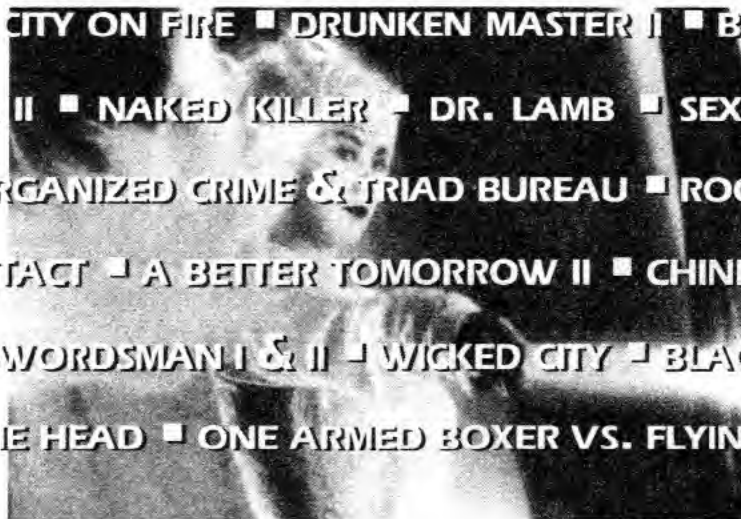


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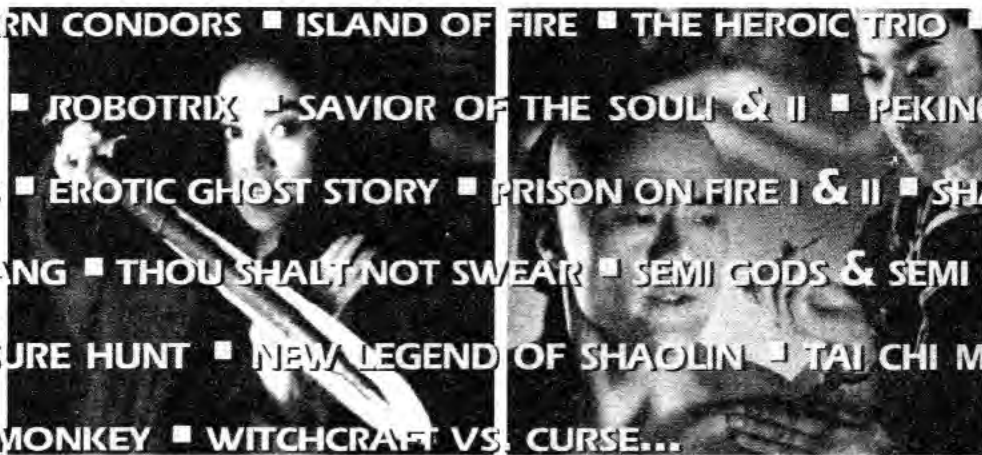
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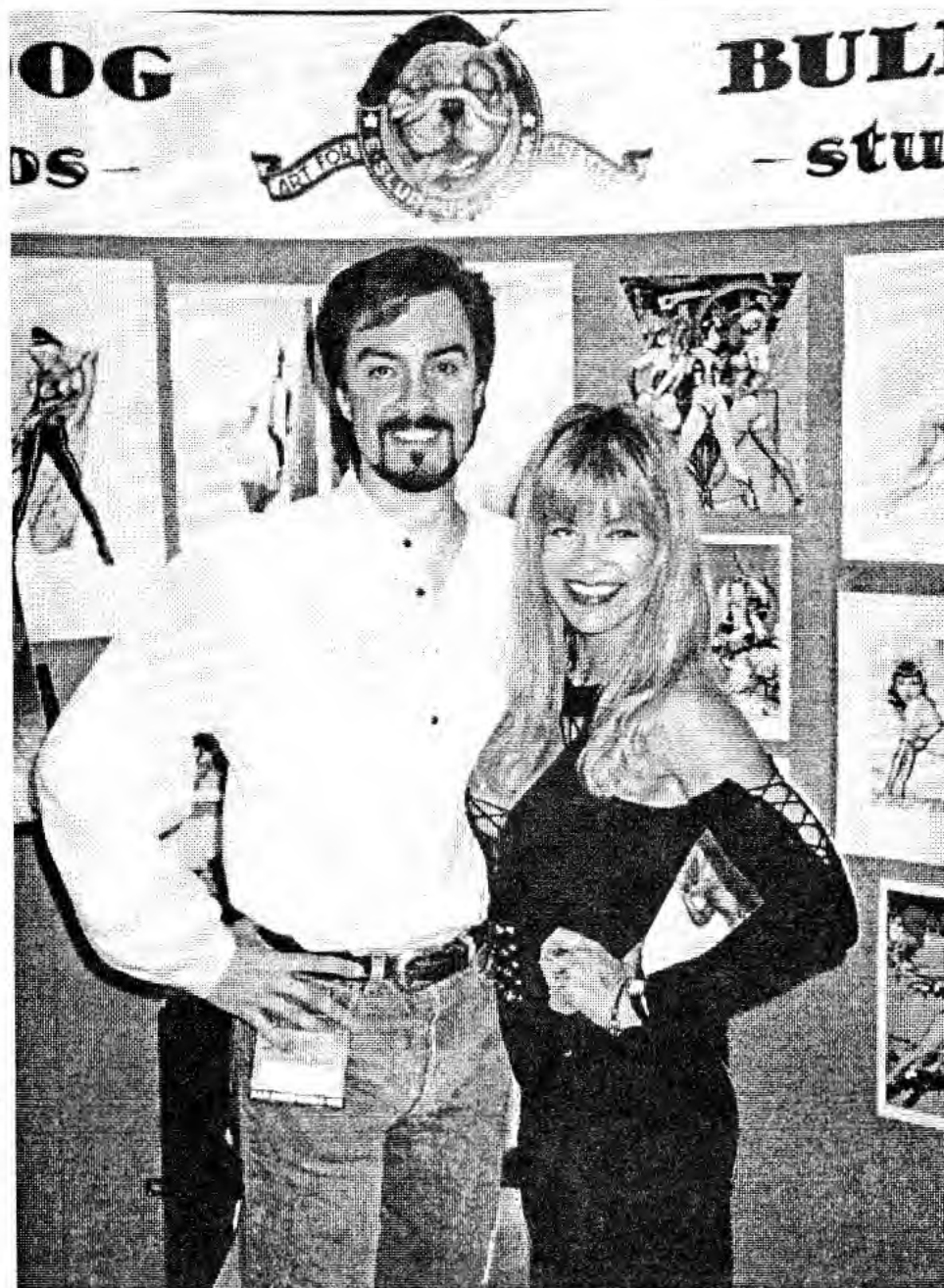
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DAVE STEVENS SPEAKS!!!



The artist and his model: Date with cover girl Marla Duncan, aka Mimi Rodin, August 1994.

Cult Movies: Were you happy with the filming of *Rocketeer* while it was in production?

Dave Stevens: I purposely tried not to look too hard at it, other than just watching the dailies. Once it got strung together in the form of a rough cut, I began to see what it could be, but I also saw an infinite number of ways it could have gone wrong. At that point I had to take a step away, make myself scarce because I didn't want to see that interim stage and have that color my feeling about the finished product. The rough cut is always the ugliest, most alarming version of a film you could be privy to. I'd look at about 15 minutes of film at a time, and I'd sit in on the looping and so on. I purposely avoided seeing the final product until the very last sages, when they had a temp

dub on it. They didn't have the right music on it, but it was good enough to see whether or not *Rocketeer* worked as a unit; and it did, so I breathed a sigh of relief knowing full well that it could have gone any other way. It could have missed the target completely if it hadn't all come together in the editing. But Joe Johnson is one of those directors who edits as he shoots; he shoots geared toward the editing.

My main concern was whether it would hold together as a story. It had been re-written to death. Also, a lot of the dialog was being created right on the set.

CM: Were they getting constant input from you?

DS: I was on the set every day. I was part of the

crew. I had access to every department, as — not a trouble shooter but as a support system. Given the title of co-producer will allow you to voice your opinion on many subjects, help keep people working together instead of at cross-purposes, which sometimes happens.

CM: Would you go through it again?

DS: In a second! I worked on a lot of films over the past 15 years or so, in various capacities. But that was always as a hired hand. I worked on the full range of productions from Ted Mikel's films up to Steven Spielberg things. But on *Rocketeer* I was more than a hired hand.

CM: I didn't know much your early work. What were you doing for Ted Mikel's?

DS: Production art. In fact, I don't even know what you'd call my job on his films — production illustrator? The film didn't warrant it.

CM: You mean doing storyboards?

DS: No, it wasn't even that. I'd do a few paintings which I guess were used to help sell the films to various distributors. At the time it was real unclear to me just what was going on. I'd come in and look at some of the chaos that was the shooting, then I'd go my own way and do other things. That was my involvement with Ted Mikel's.

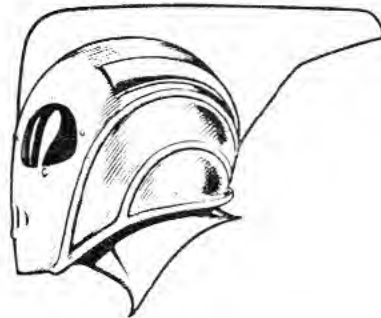
CM: What was the film?

DS: A Steve Arquette thing called *The Aftermath* in the mid-1970s. It was one of my earliest jobs.

But even before that, my first feature that I worked on was *Doc Savage*, George Pal's picture for Warner Brothers. There I worked with Leo Wilder who was the V.P. of publicity. I did some B&W art to promote the film and George Pal's appearance at a convention in San Diego. They were real nice — very generous with me. They invited me to the screenings, and so on.

The next thing I lined up was with Joe Mass at Golden Films; the *Giant Spider Invasion*, or something like that. I did comic book adaptations for it and a shark film that they had. Actually, Russ Manning was contracted to do both of them, and he did some of the *Spider Invasion*. Then when it came time to do the shark film, Russ didn't want to do it, so I did it. It never got beyond the layout stage. I did the roughs for it and they pulled the plug on the comic so I did some publicity art for it.

Then I did some publicity art for *The Amazing Dobermans*. I'm not sure if this was used on the ad mats, since I never saw the film. I did some art for *Thunder Mountain* for Golden Films. I think there were some other films I worked on for them. *Amazing Dobermans* was probably the last one I worked on before Golden Films went belly up. Then I went there to the offices to get my paycheck for the next weeks work and the place was all locked up; there was no one there!



CM: Did you ever get paid?

DS: No. I think they owed me two thousand bucks or so, but of course that was a lot of money to a young kid like me. Actually, that was a kind of strange place — I never was really sure where their money came from. Alan White, who worked there with Joe, was a real decent guy. And just before the axe fell he said, "Now listen, don't bring any more art here and leave it here." He gave me the hint that I might not get it back, and I probably wasn't going to get paid. And he was right!

CM: How many films did you work on for them?

DS: It's been so long since I've thought about any of this, but I'd say 8 to 10 films. But I was pretty lucky. I don't know who put him on to me, but Paul Bartel called me out of the blue in 1975, right after Golden Films folded. I was between working with Russ Manning on the Tarzan Sunday strip, and getting into serious painting. I was living in San Diego and Paul contacted me down there and asked me to work on some conceptual art for a thing he had in mind called *Franken-car*. It was to be about a guy who was blown to pieces and what was left of him was grafted into a real outrageous street machine. While it sounds like a laughable concept, in the hands of Bartel it probably would have been pretty watchable, because he had such whacky, off-the-wall ideas. I did two paintings for it, one of which became a full page ad in *Variety*. And I did a series of drawings for it, but somewhere along the line he must have gotten the idea that this was just too impossible, and he never went forward with it.

There were a lot of things like that which I got involved with just because, at the time, it was all that was available to somebody my age that just wasn't connected by family or friends. I wasn't part of the crony-ism of the mid '70s in Hollywood. I knew a few people and was able to sort of peer in, but I wasn't a part of it, so I took what jobs came to me. Which was okay, because at that age I didn't have the ability to do anything top notch anyway. I was just barely able to deliver what they asked me to do. I wasn't much of a painter as a kid, and my strong suit was stylized drawings.

I did two or three paintings for *Famous Monsters* on speculation, as potential covers for the magazine, and Forry Ackerman loved them. But the colors were a little bit subdued; in those days they were doing the real bright, neon color-schemes and mine just didn't fit in.

CM: What did you paint for them?

DS: I did a portrait of Peter Lorre from *Man Who Knew Too Much*. There was a character shot of Chaney, Sr. And the other one was the famous face-off between King Kong and the Tyrannosaurus in the jungle. And Forry wanted me to try and punch up the colors and make them conform to the covers they were running at the time. I took them home and thought about it and thought about it, but just couldn't come up with a way to re-work them with zap colors without destroying them. I just didn't know enough about paint then to do it. So I just kept them and used them as portfolio pieces.

CM: Do you still have them?

DS: Somewhere, yeah.

Then about that time I met John Landis when he was working on *Kentucky Fried Movie*. Paul Bartel sent me over to see him. I sat and talked with John at the moviola, ate cashews while we talked about some projects. We did end up working together in 1983 on Michael Jackson's *Thriller* video. That was a mini-movie, 20 minutes long, and I was brought in to do the storyboards.

CM: Who's idea was it to expand the three

minute vidclip format?

DS: I'm sure it was Michael's. He wanted to do something different and he brought in John Landis because he loved Landis' *American Werewolf In London*. John didn't normally use storyboards, but he called me because Michael needed to see beat for beat, shot for shot, how the set ups were going to look. And storyboards are the most economical



way to do that. I was there for a few weeks working on that, I met with Michael, and he liked the work enough to bring me back for the Jackson "Victory Tour." They had some unusual laser light one-act show. Rick Baker did most of the actual work on it.

CM: Did you go into animation about that time?

DS: Well, shortly after. I began to get the idea that there were lots of job offers in the B-movie arena that I should avoid. I had a clear idea that I didn't want to scrape rock bottom each month just to keep food on the table. So about that time I just went into advertising and stayed in it for about two years. Then I got a call from somebody at Hanna-Barbara because Doug Wildy, the guy that had created *Johnny Quest*, was starting up a new series and was looking for people who could draw in a realistic style, not cartoony. So I took my portfolio in and met Doug, and he hired me on the spot. And that turned out to be for *Godzilla*, the animated Saturday morning show, along with a companion segment called "Janna of the Jungle." It was fun, and I'd always wanted to do animation. I have friends who were working at Disney at the time, and it looked interesting, but it didn't seem like an arena that was open to me. So when the

Hanna-Barbara thing was offered, I went into it with a lot of enthusiasm, knowing it was something more I could learn and apply. So I stayed there for two years doing development art, key layouts for animation, model design, anything. Whatever they would put me on, I would do. It was fun and real educational, but ultimately it was unsatisfying because it didn't force me to extend myself artistically.

CM: What was the childhood that prepared you for all this? You're known for your involvement with glamour art, as well as the fantasy and monster genre...

DS: There was a guy named Andy Anderson who used to have a company called Photrix.

I'd see his ads in the back of old mens magazines. He had two or three other names going for basically the same business. It was all P. O. Boxes and he was working on Yucca Street in Hollywood. This was that stretch of Yucca Street between Highland and Cahuenga. I remember seeing that set up in old 1950s magazines, and then seeing these same street numbers, with different business names, in newer magazines offering this product in the '60s and '70s. So I contacted him to see if he had anything left on Betty Page or Candy Barr. It was kind of a mysterious set up, but it turned out that they did have some 8mm loops still available for sale. I wrote back and ordered short films with Tempest Storm, Ginny Lee — whoever they still had left.

I'd had no idea there was anything like this out there. This was around 1976 and none of my friends were interested in this old stuff. It was my personal quirk, coming out of my discovering Betty Page when I was still in school. I'd been reading old issues of *Frolic* and *Gala*, which whetted my appetite for the old world of burlesque. I wanted to try and ferret out what I could of it. And over the last 18 years or so, I've been able to lay my hands on just about everything I'd wanted to find then and wasn't able to. It's all coming to the surface now.

CM: Do you still have all this material?

DS: I gave the loops to Mike Vraney at Something Weird Video for his nudie cutie video series. I kept my Betty Page loops, but all the others went to Vraney. I still have some of the paper. There used to be a place in downtown Los Angeles called Everybody's Bookstore. That's where I found old issues of *Heels and Hose*, as well as *Film Fun*, *Whisper*, and things like that. In the early '70s some of my friends had paper collectibles — before they were called collectibles! *Confidential* and other magazines with articles on Vampira and James Dean, and all the night people. These were influential to me. I'd always saved old magazines, such as *Look* and *Life*; but when I discovered the pin-up magazines, that turned the tide for me. That's when I discovered Diane Webber, Betty Page, and the whole world of "flesh." In the early '70s you

(continued)

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could buy this stuff for virtually nothing — nobody cared about it. Now that of course, it's expensive stuff — and being bought up like mad. But I hung on to these images, knowing I'd use them some day.

And in 1981 I did use the image of Betty Page in *The Rocketeer*. Everything in my life and career seems to have worked out that way. At some early stage in my life I'll see an image or get the germ of an idea and salt it away for future use, and the time always comes around when I'll make use of it in some big way.

CM: Can we talk about your meeting with Betty Page?

DS: That came about through the good graces of her brother Jack, and her lawyer James Swanson. They were working on her, trying to get her to meet me.

CM: Because of your comics?

DS: Partly because of that. They knew I'd done the comics. But they knew I was interested in her on a personal level, and I think they felt that I was trustworthy enough and wasn't going to do something that'd cause problems. She'd already had contact with one or two of her "fans" and had experiences that left her feeling a bit disappointed. She decided she just didn't want to meet anymore of these people — but they did convince her to meet me. So I went out and met her in March of 1994, and I've been seeing her fairly regularly ever since. I call her a couple times each week, and try to get together with her every few weeks or so as time allows. We'll go to supper and see a movie, or maybe take drive up the coast. She's 71 years old now but still very active and interested in doing things. She hasn't retired from life.

I don't know what is forthcoming for Betty in her career. I do know there's a book in the works. Probably a bio and a coffee table art book. I'm going to do some paintings of her which we'll sell as limited edition prints which she and I will both sign. We're also doing a statuette of her for the comicbook marketplace.

CM: There'll be a lot of interest in those prints; I'll want a set of them!

DS: There's been an interest and a market for these kinds of items over the last ten years or so, but nobody was providing anything with any degree of quality. Then a deluge of underground stuff appeared — the zines, trading cards, the "Tor Loves Betty" kind of things.

CM: Did she get a percentage of any of that?

DS: Not a dime. The bad thing about a lot of that

was that these people would appropriate what they thought were public domain photos to make their Betty buttons, picture-magnets, or whatever, make their money and get out. To try and chase those people down 10 years later and get them to cough up 10 percent is just impossible. The money's gone and so are they. A few of the people have come through with some money for her, but it's just a handful compared to the tremendous proliferation of material that was being sold just five years ago. And a lot of that is still on the market in fact. So we're trying to put together some licenced merchandise for Betty that will be quality material.

CM: Why do you think the public still has a fascination for her after 40 years?

DS: To begin with, she was a natural beauty. Just look at a photo of her. Her eyes are alive and her face is so expressive. She was into it, and that's what separates the good models from the bad. She wasn't just doing it for the money; she was really having fun, getting into costumes, teetering around in those skyscraper high heels. With all the things that we know and have seen in entertainment today, with hardcore and all, looking back at the old fetish material of the 1950's — it's almost quaint by today's standards. Those films and magazines seem so innocuous that it's hard to see how anyone could have gotten so outraged by it all. But you have to remember that this was a very repressed society then, and any sexual imagery was considered dangerous by the arbiters of morality. And Betty still stands out as the vibrant, focal figure for that whole movement, even though she wasn't personally into bondage or spanking per say — it was just a gig for her. She was such an enthusiastic performer that people looked at the pictures and thought, "This is her life!"

CM: You mentioned doing those spec paintings for *Famous Monsters*, and I wondered if you ever wound up having any involvement with *Creepy* or *Eerie*.

DS: I nearly worked for them right toward the end. I made some submissions for Warren and with any luck I might have wound up in there if

the magazines had continued, because I was right out of high school, and that was the career direction I was pursuing. But after I finished my stint on the Sunday morning *Tarzan* strip, I did a serious about-face and went into illustration and advertising.

When I did *Rocketeer* it was an experiment just to see if in fact I had the ability to do one by myself; to write it, draw it, ink it, and color it. Then put it out there and see if anybody would read it. It still may end up being a one-time only thing for me; I don't know if I'll ever repeat that experiment again.

CM: Aren't there more *Rocketeer* comics coming out?

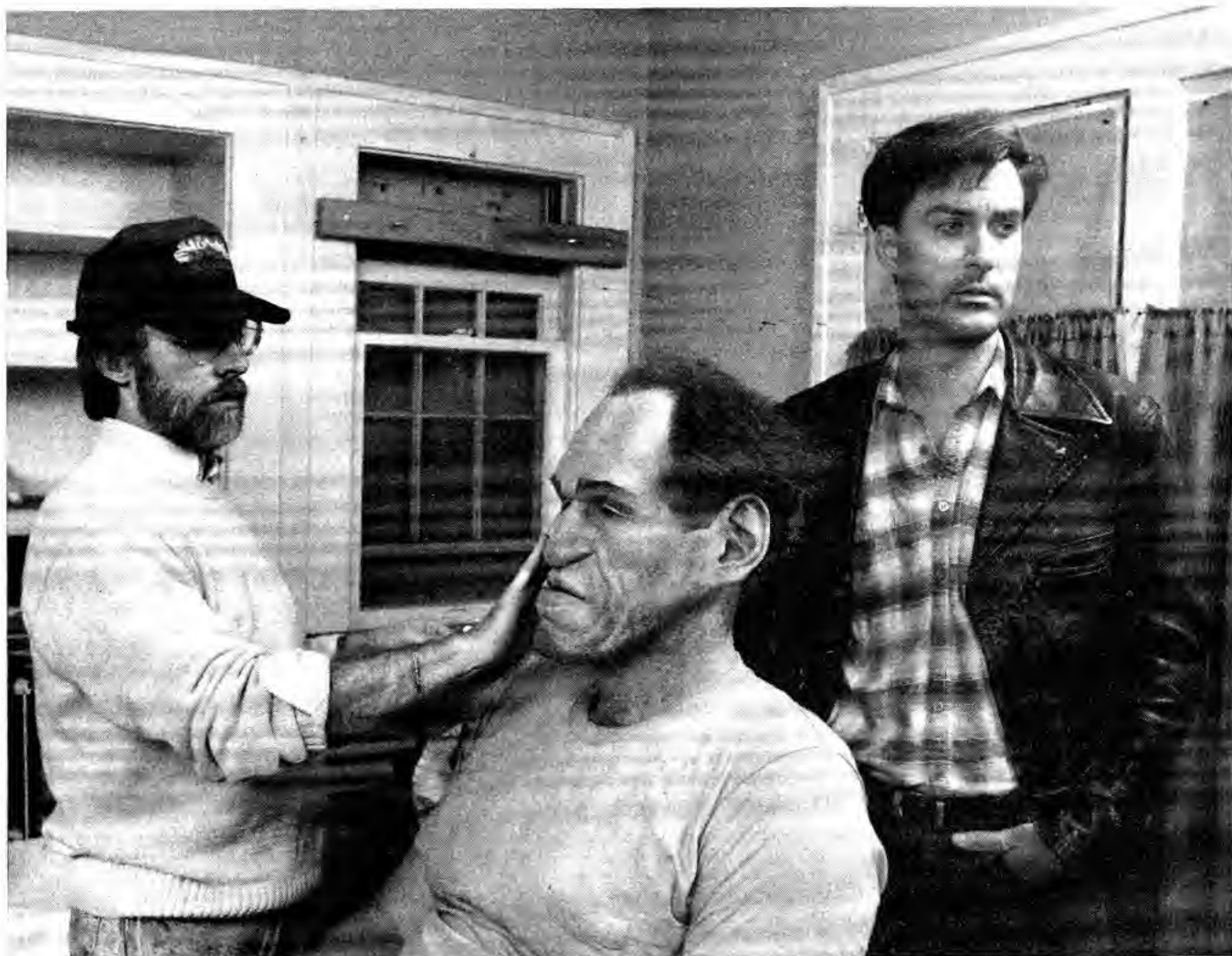
DS: Dark Horse comics had picked up the series and I'm doing one last episode for them, which should be out in early 1995. Then they'll continue the series with other artists and I'll just supervise. I'm doing a different type of project for them that I'll be devoting most of my time to. It's an illustrated novel about a character I've created, an exotic young woman known as Mimi Rodin. It'll be short — under 100 pages with 50 illustrations. We'll have paintings, drawings — a real mixed-media presentation to showcase some of the things I can do. It's another experiment. And if it sells, I'm going to try to put another film deal together, because I very much want to direct it.

A few years ago I never would have wanted to try this. But I've had a few years experience in film, and I've got enough of a visual sense that now I want to give it a try. I've come away from some of my past projects with a lot of story-telling ideas and now I want to put them to good use and find out if I'll be a better director than Ed Wood or not.

If I don't at least make the attempt to do a film myself, I'll forever wonder if I could have. So I'm just going to proceed with Mimi as planned. It may be a co-production deal between an American production company and a French studio, because the story takes place in Paris. So at least some second unit stuff is going to have to be shot over there. At the very worst, I'll just go over myself and shoot a lot of plate shots of the different



1975 — l to r: Paul Michael Glaser, Harry Blackstone Jr., Dave Stevens filming ABC's *The Great Houdinis*.



l to r: Make-up artist Greg Nelson, Tiny Tim, and Dave Stevens on the set of *The Rocketeer*, 1990.

parts of Paris and fill in the actors later. I'm going around now and costing out some effects shots for a test reel.

CM: Do you have an "And introducing" lined up to portray Miss Rodin if you get the green light?

DS: The girl I'm going to push real hard for in this film happens to be a model named Marla Duncan. She's one of the most popular cover girls in fitness magazines both here and abroad. Hers is the face that I was looking for to portray Mimi Rodin as I envisioned her; she's got a unique look. She's done enough acting that I think she'll have a shot.

And, of course, it may boil down to an unknown vs. a name talent if a studio finances it. We ran into the same thing with *Rocketeer*. Disney wanted Emilio Estevez. For a while Johnny Depp was in the running for the part. Good as they might have been, there always would have been in the back of the viewers' mind, "This is Mel Gibson playing a part." And all that baggage and expectations that come with such a high profile performer can color a part in a way that a total unknown just will not do. But then again, aesthetics are seldom a consideration in matters of high finance.

There are a lot of similar built-in problems when you translate a written property to cinema. When you make the jump to building sets, casting characters and putting a lot of dialog in their mouths, you run the risk of the property looking foolish or else just falling flat and not working at all. Or you come up with a winner! It's a real toss of the dice; you don't know, once you've made the commitment, unless you've got a brilliant kind of

vision and can make it happen physically, whether or not it's going to come together. Even going back as far as Tanya Roberts' *Sheena*, and even the last *Superman* — a lot of that stuff falls with a resounding thud once it hits the screen. Some of these things don't translate well, and part of the reason is that the audiences know a little too much now. They've seen these things before. Even a lot of kids now giggle at costumed guys running around in tights. It's not the same world it was, when, 40 years ago, these characters were popular with all ages.

But also a main failing of these recent films was that the creative teams responsible for bringing these to life on the screen just weren't up to it. It may have been a bad combination of writer, director, production designer, whatever. But somehow they were never able to nail down what made those characters work on the printed page. It's a tough thing to carry off! They were just barely able to do it with the first *Batman* film, and that was due in large part to Anton Furst's and Tim Burton's "look." If not for that over-the-top, Gothic styling it wouldn't have been as well received.

With a lot of these costume pieces the visuals are everything. But again, you have to make sure that in the selling of that visual element that you don't sacrifice content. If the script gets lost in the translation by endless re-writing or just too many cooks in the kitchen, all putting their two cents in as to "What's gonna make this character believable," you'll wind up with a hodgepodge of a script that just doesn't come together and dia-

logue that makes you wince, and a good case in point would be *The Shadow*.

CM: I was just going to ask you what you thought of that one! They sure had the look together.

DS: Oh, visually it was brilliant! Stunning! One of the best looking pieces of production design I've seen in the last four or five years. But somehow everybody concerned with it was just unable to take a step back and take a good look at that script, which was abysmal. That costume epic aspect of it, with Shiwin Kahn's minions in their armor running around Manhattan was like a weird throwback to "Wild, Wild West." It was cartoonish.

CM: None of the elements quite matched, did they?

DS: No. They went too far in the extreme. They could have pulled it back just a bit visually, and they should have. But again, once the characters started speaking and you heard how bad that script was, it didn't matter what happened visually. To me it was a real shame, since I love *The Shadow* character, and was hoping to see some classic crime fiction film noir stylings.

It's hard to know where it went wrong. Did the director tamper with it? Did the actors tamper with it? Or was it just a badly written script going in? Lots of times a script can get re-written so many times — tampered with by too many people — that it becomes a patchwork and doesn't hang together. Many people in this business still do not understand that decisions by committee are not

(continued)

always the best way to go. Committe decisions are basically projects where no one has the balls to stand up and say, "This is my vision; this is the way it's going to look." Sure, filmmaking is a communal experience, and a social art form.

You have to work well with other people and be ready for a lot of compromise for the good of the film rather than for personal ego. But at some time, somebody has to be there to stand up and say, "Hey, wait a minute — this script stinks. Where did we go wrong? We lost it somewhere and something's got to be done." And apparently nobody did that with *The Shadow*. Somehow they all kidded themselves into thinking they had a real winner. It's sad to know that this still happens in this business.

CM: *The Shadow* was in and out of the planning stages at Universal for over 10 years. Maybe the gestation period was just too long.

DS: *Sheena* was in and out of production for 10 years. I think *Batman* had been optioned to studios and announced for nearly that long. Even *The Rocketeer* went through that. It was pitched in 1986 and Disney bought it in '87, then sat on it for a good three years.

Another thing that can kill a good film is the advance screenings, audience testing and endless re-editing to try and tailor the show to fit the presumed homogenous tastes of an American audience. The studios are afraid to offend anyone and thereby lose one ticket sale. "We mustn't ruffle any feathers! We've got to test these things and re-write the endings if they don't work!" I don't believe in that brand of filmmaking. You can't always have a happy ending.

CM: You're talking like one who really loves movies.

DS: Every kind of movie — old ones, new ones! I lived at the revival houses in Los Angeles in the 1970s. There was the Sherman Theatre, the Nuart, and the Vagabond, and I was at these almost every day. Also the Fox and the Rialto, all showing classic films, both domestic and European. I literally spent the entire summer of 1979 in the Sherman



Theatre. I saw the best prints of obscure and classic films at that theatre. That was my education in film. Anything I'd missed on television I got to see on the big screen.

CM: And were these theatres packed?

DS: Oh, yeah! There'd be lines around the block to see a festival of films — features and serials. This was before the advent of home video when everybody decided to stay away from the theatres. These were the best of times for film buffs. Sell-out crowds to see beautiful new prints of these films. A new show every other day! It was like going to film school. They'd have a Fritz Lang retrospective, or Orson Welles, or Cocteau. And quite often they'd have one or two of the people from the films on hand to meet the audience and answer questions. I even got to meet childhood hero Dave Fleischer, the director of the original Popeye, Betty Boop, and Superman cartoons. It was about a year before he died, and to me that was akin to meeting God. At that time in my life it wasn't Disney that I was so impressed with, it was the Fleischers. Their films, in black & white, were so vibrant; nightmarishly wonderful and not sugary sweet like the Disney stuff. They were the real innovators. Absolute visionaries.

CM: It's ironic that their Popeye cartoons were so great that they overshadowed the original Popeye comic strips. That kind of thing often happens; the *Shadow* radio show is more re-

nowned than the *Shadow* novels that inspired them...

DS: I never cared for the radio show. I was a pulp novel fanatic. Those novels were gritty and hard boiled — and people died in those stories, with alarming frequency. The radio *Shadow* was just a bit too clean, and Lamont Cranston was too weak. His *Shadow* was weak, it had no teeth.

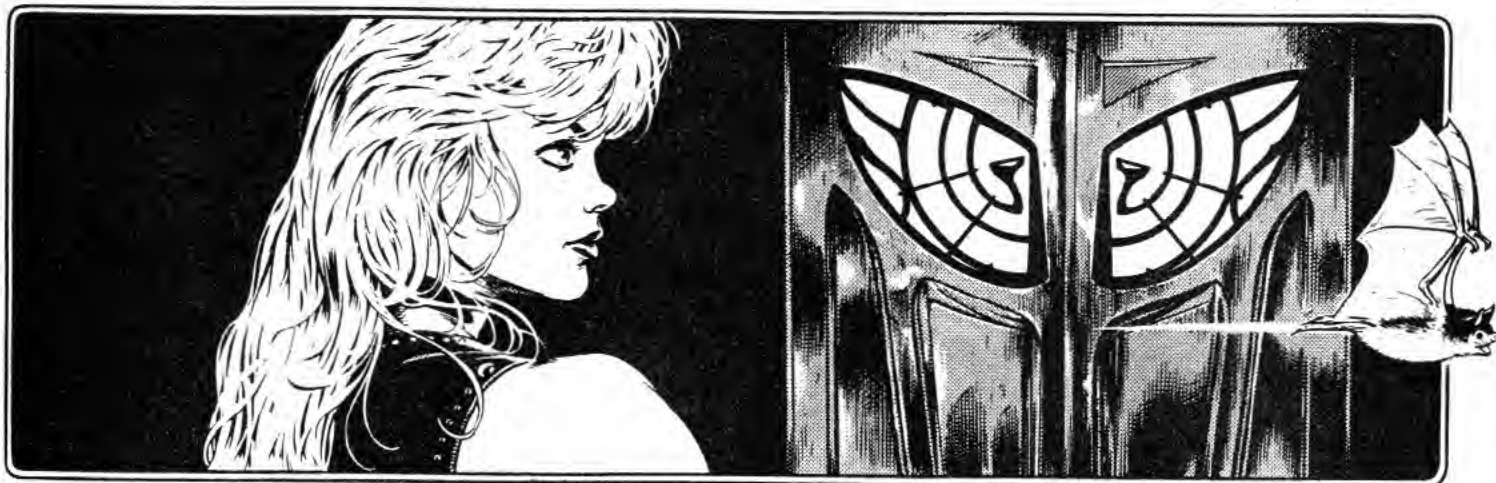
CM: Did you collect the actual pulp magazines?

DS: As many as I could lay my hands on. And that was the early '70s when Bantam started re-printing the novels in paperback form. That was great because they were also re-printing the *Doc Savage* books. But I much preferred *The Shadow*, which seemed more adult in tone and had greater continuity, since the majority of them were written by Walter Gibson, not farmed out to a variety of house writers. I was about 14 or 15 when I was reading those; a bit old for Edgar Rice Burroughs by then, so *The Shadow* was the next logical step, and on to some Sci-Fi and other mystery and crime fiction, Chandler, Hammet, Garner, etc.

CM: I read somewhere that you met Walter Gibson.

DS: Yes, in 1975 down in San Diego where he spoke at a convention. He talked about Houdini, which I was really excited about. I'd toured the previous year with a company that performed a Houdini magic show and I got a real taste for magic and illusion from that. Gibson was just the greatest! He was vital, and very enthusiastic about everything. He could rattle off stories and facts and names that were as fresh as when they happened 50 years prior. He must have been around 80 years old when I saw him, but that didn't slow him down a bit; he was fun and full of energy. Unfortunately, I was so awed that I just didn't know what to ask him, so I mostly hung around and listened to other people ask questions. If I could meet him now — boy! I'd have hundreds of questions, about his career, the people he'd met, and so on. ■

(Continued Next Issue)



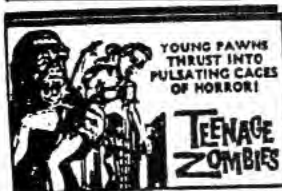
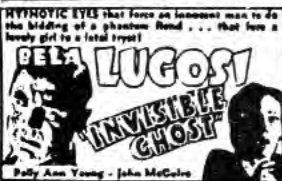
Interior illustration from Dave's forthcoming book *The Mad World of Mimi Rodin*.

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At Long Last Lugosi!

Film History's Evolving View of Bela Lugosi

A Cult Movies Exclusive
by Frank J. Dello Stritto

In the almost 40 years since Bela Lugosi's death, the assessment and stature of the man as screen personality and influence on the horror film has evolved remarkably. Among students of the horror film, final judgement on Lugosi is never quite settled. As Arthur Lennig wrote in 1965, Lugosi is either "the embodiment of dark mysterious forces," or "merely a ham playing in low budget quickies." Over these 38 years, the magnitude of Lugosi's star has been in a continual state of flux – dimmed and brightened as new facts concerning his career come to light, and as new horror films affect how the older ones are judged.

An overview of Lugosi's treatment by film writers over the past decades is timely now that we are in something of a Lugosi renaissance. There's probably more being published about his work now than at any time in the past, and the diversity of opinions is quite exciting. He can pop up almost anywhere – in the pages of magazines such as ours, in serious writings on film and 20th century culture, in the musings of a world class author (to be quoted later), and as a major character in Tim Burton's film on cult figure Edward D. Wood, Jr. For Lugosi followers pro and con, this is an exciting period – made more exciting, I hope, by reflecting on how we got here.

From a Cult of Fans to an Epidemic of Draculas

Published criticisms on Lugosi's work through about 1980 tend to fall into three overlapping trends. The first, from roughly 1960 to 1970, was one of juvenile adulation. Horror film history as a subject was then in its infancy. Virtually the only published materials were fan magazines aimed at pre-teens (which included, until 1963, me). Articles on Lugosi seldom questioned his place as one of the three great horror stars (with Karloff and Chaney, Sr.) and as the definitive Dracula. Almost without exception, they gave Lugosi unqualified praise.

The rise of Christopher Lee as a serious contender to the Dracula mantle stirred a second movement (approximately 1965 through 1975), marked by a decline in Lugosi's reputation as an actor and horror star.

The third phase, 1970 through 1980, signalled a more mature interest in Lugosi, and really marked the first serious criticisms of his acting. These years produced the Lennig and Cremer biographies and Bojarski's filmography.

Arthur Lennig's first published writings on Lugosi in 1965 do not fit well into any of these trends. His exceptional essay is perhaps the true landmark work on Lugosi's career, which literally set the course for the future. Before 1965 the only

insightful comments on Lugosi's acting came from Lugosi himself.

Around 1980 a curious combination of factors came into play. Lucas, Spielberg et al. began churning out incredibly popular films that were in essence big budget updates of the adventure and fantasy films of their youths. These dazzling movies paid homage to the old classics, but also overwhelmed them in the eyes of the traditional audience for fantasy entertainment. Then, 1979 saw

what *Life Magazine* called an "Epidemic of Draculas," three new Dracula movies (*Nosferatu*, the Badham/Langella *Dracula* and *Love At First Bite*), each a hit and each with quite a different twist on the Count. Attacked on two fronts, Lugosi films – black & white, virtually without special effects, rarely more than 75 minutes long – entered a period of neglect.

Or perhaps it was period a gestation. With one sterling exception (James Twitchell's *Dreadful Pleasures*), the 1980s produced little new information or insights into the classic horrors of a generation before. Just as the new films began to push the old ones out of circulation came video recordings. At long last, showings of "old" films were not at the whim of television or revival theatres. At the same time, horror films, especially classics from the 1930s, began to emerge as more than an adolescent pastime or a guilty pleasure. Individually, they were studied as entertainment and works of art. Collectively, they were harbingers and outlets for the cultural subconscious. The time had arrived to look closely at Lugosi.

But before we do, let's see what those who preceded us had to say.

1960-1970: Juvenile Adulation

Nowhere is the ambiguity that so often surrounds Lugosi's career more apparent than in the first critical accounts published after his death. Bela Lugosi died largely a forgotten man. His



career interested none of the serious film writers of the day, and his films excited only his most ardent fans. By default, the maintenance of Lugosi's memory fell to these fans – young, amateur film historians. Their zeal to fit Lugosi's work into some coherent perspective was offset by a general lack and distortion of information on his career, the unavailability of some important films, and the absence of a proper forum to develop their ideas. The whole of the horror cult experienced these same problems. They improvised on the first two limitations at best they could; they ingeniously resolved the last with that most vulgar and wonderful invention: the monster magazine.

Casting 1960s monster magazines as serious contributors to film study is risky, but they undeniably performed one great achievement. They invented the study of horror film history, which has grown into a scholarly pursuit that produces several learned books and many fine journal articles each year. Today's treatises on horror and fantasy as dark mirrors of a culture are direct descendants of monster magazines. Creating a whole discipline of study is no mean task, and it all started with *Famous Monsters of Filmland* in 1958 and the others that soon followed. *FM*, *For Monsters Only*, *Movie Monsters* and others, paid tribute to the great horror masters and their classics.

A large majority of the pieces in these early monster magazines are bright, laudatory and reverent. The format is particularly ill-suited to Lugosi, whose myriad of personal and professional problems are too widely known and too interwoven with his films to be dismissed. Consequently, articles dealing with Lugosi are both the most interesting and the most awkward.

The monster magazine biographies and retrospectives attempt to describe his screen mystique, and to account for his acting, both good and bad. From this amorphous and largely anonymous collection of articles (and letters-to-the-editor; often that's where the real action is), four "rules" emerged to explain almost everything to contemporary satisfaction:

- 1) Lugosi was essentially a stage actor whose technique was not well adapted to the screen.
- 2) Lugosi gave every role, no matter how trite, everything he had. His keynote was total conviction.
- 3) Lugosi had no flair for comedy and simply did not play it well.
- 4) Unlike Chaney and Karloff, who appealed to an audience's sympathies, Lugosi demanded only its fear.

Just as Lugosi left his fans a legacy of mostly inferior films, his fans in turn bequeath him these mostly inferior one-liners. For many years, they were the basis for critical evaluations of Lugosi's work and enjoyed wide acceptance. They were intended to define and defend his place in horror film history. Eventually, they served to isolate him from that rich history, and retarded a fuller, more realistic assessment of his role in it. These "rules" so influenced and so continue to influence writings on Lugosi, that some reckoning of them is merited here.

The contention that Lugosi was essentially a stage actor gained currency in part due to Lugosi himself. His vaunted and largely unsubstantiated claim to be "The Barrymore of Hungary" certainly suggested that his true talent lie before the footlights. His mannered and formal style of acting support the opinion, as does the simple fact that his stage performances received far more critical praise than his screen appearances. In 1963, the stage-actor-only complex was solidified with the publication in *Famous Monsters* of a speech Lugosi allegedly himself made in 1931. On the filming of



Dracula, Lugosi said:

"In playing in the picture I found that there was a great deal that I had to unlearn. In the theater I was playing not only to the spectators in the front rows but also to those in the last row of the gallery, and some exaggeration in everything I did, not only in the tonal pitch of my voice but in the changes of facial expression which accompanied various lines and situations, was necessary. I 'took it big,' as the saying is. But for the screen, in which the actor's distance from every member of the audience is equal only to his distance from the lens of the camera. I have found that a great deal of the repression was an absolute necessity. Tod Browning has continually had to 'hold me down.' In my other screen roles, I did not seem to have this difficulty but I have played *Dracula* a thousand times on the stage and in this one role, I find that I have become thoroughly settled in the technique of the stage and not of the screen. But thanks to director Browning I am unlearning fast."

"Essentially a stage actor" became a rallying point for Lugosi apologists. When *FM* published a special Lugosi issue in 1972, it reprinted the above quote, and included an article, "Could Lugosi Act?" In that piece, Michael Rosen (who firmly believes Lugosi could act) states:

"Lugosi was first and foremost a stage actor...A stage actor must make certain that he communicates with the person in the last row of the third balcony. Emotions must be registered graphically, gestures exaggerated, the voice cannoned out. Such a display of histrionics looks a bit ridiculous when recorded by a motion picture camera only a few feet away. Again, this is certainly Lugosi's shortcoming."

In retrospect, that the stage-actor theory was advanced by Lugosi's supporters and not his detractors seems incredible. Hundreds of Hollywood actors had stage origins as strong as Lugosi's. Yet, only for Lugosi does his stage background explain an offbeat acting style. The contention does not explain why some of his best work is with directors with a cinematic flare (Ulmer, Friedlander, Kenton), or why some of his performances reveal a fine reflex for exploiting the camera (*Chandu, The Magician*, *Son Of Frankenstein*, and *Murders In The Rue Morgue*). Any theatricality in his performances is usually more than matched by the theatricality of the films that contain them. Lugosi consistently worked on very tight filming schedules with life-

less scripts and uninspired direction. Hardly surprising that a non-cinematic style would often result.

Lugosi may well have approached every role with total conviction. Many of his costars have noted how hard he worked on his parts and how seriously he took his craft. He probably never played a serious part for laughs. Again, Lugosi himself supports the opinion. He told *The New York Times*:

"You can't make people believe in you if you play a horror part with your tongue in your cheek. The screen magnifies everything, even the way you are thinking. If you are not serious, people will sense it. No matter how Hokum or highly melodramatic the horror part may be, you believe in it while you are playing it."

That was in 1935, but by 1939 on the set of *Ninotchka* his tone was more sober (note: as with a good many Lugosi quotes, I doubt he ever said this, but it is at least as credible as most of what is attributed to him):

"Obviously such horror roles are synthetic characters and therefore, all the actor can give them is synthetic acting. A certain set of expressions and gestures and quite a bit of what we call 'mugging' go into them but there is no analysis of a human character, no effort to present a living entity anyone in the audience can recognize or understand. Enacting a vampire is something like an acrobat's or juggler's routine. The actor gets so that he can do it in his sleep."

As with many aspects of his life, Lugosi was inconsistent in discussing his acting with interviewers. Undoubtedly, however, he realized a good many of his films were trash, and was saying so, as early as 1935 (in an interview with the *New York World Telegram* on his return from England). The suggestion has often been made that Lugosi was not especially aware or concerned with the effects he created. Carlos Clarens notes that *The Raven* was:

"memorable mainly for Lugosi's unwitting self-burlesque. When the script has him exulting in such lines as 'Poe, you are avenged!' without a shadow of tongue in cheek, the movie becomes its own deadly parody."

What is often interpreted as conviction may in reality be standard Lugosi. He easily projected intensity and purpose. He was one of the great screen presences. Certainly, he could effortlessly and routinely create his stereotype, and "do it in his sleep." In one of the last interviews of his life, he remarked with typical ambiguity to columnist Sidney Skolsky:

"If I give a good performance, it has nothing to do with talent. I am now more resurrected than real."

That Lugosi could not play comedy is an outgrowth of his determined approach and regard for his profession; but there's a difference between a serious actor and always acting seriously. "No flair for comedy" has weakened in recent years, as his obscure, pre-*Dracula* films (*Women Of All Nations*, *Renegades*, *Broadminded*) have slowly received some exposure and as more information on his American stage career comes to light. There's any number of fine comic touches where they're called for, in for example *Son Of Frankenstein* (in which he's both the menace and the comic relief), the second *The Black Cat* and his spooky comedies in

(continued)

the 1940s. He was certainly not a comic actor, but he was a competent straightman in *International House* and *Zombies On Broadway* – in both he performs comic scenes alone and without lines and does quite well. He was right on target in *Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein* and his brief scene in *Ninotchka*. It's not his fault that most of the comedies he appeared in were simply bad comedies. But a wary nod must be given him for sneezing a four-letter word passed the censors and into *Ghosts On The Loose*. Certainly that's one instance when his comic timing and delivery were perfect.

The catch-all phrase that Lugosi demanded the audience's fear and not its sympathy is partially true, but hardly a complete explanation of his appeal. In 1965 Arthur Lennig first offered a different view. According to Lennig, the Lugosi image is not our darkest nightmare, but rather our darkest desire. While Chaney and Karloff mirror the sufferings and loneliness inflicted by an inhuman world, Lugosi punishes and attacks that world. No righter of wrongs, no champion of the underdog, Lugosi defies society with an ego and genius equal to its own. The desires Lugosi embodies may not be noble, but Lennig gives him something of a universal appeal, and lifts him above being a mere bogeyman. As we shall see later on, Lennig's insight was a harbinger of another element of the Lugosi mystique which particularly fascinates today's film scholars.

While Lennig's opus magnum was not to come until 1974, he published in 1965 the first intelligent assessment of Lugosi's life and career. Lennig writes:

"In many ways Bela Lugosi is a difficult figure. Perhaps one must take him 'con amore' or not at all. His films have often been maligned and he has been snickered at as corny – not always without justice. Admittedly, he is an uneven performer – who would not be, considering some of the imbecilic plots in which he appeared – but it is a tribute to his talent that he makes his roles as palatable as they are. If Lugosi chews the scenery at times, he chews with grandiose vigor; he is never dull.

"Lugosi is a personality first, an actor second. On the other hand, his most famous rival, Boris Karloff, though technically a better actor, lacks this kind of individual flair... whereas Karloff brings compassion to his portrayals, Lugosi brings passion to his. One does not pity Lugosi, one respects him, even in his madness and evil-doing. Lugosi is an aristocrat of evil, Karloff a proletarian of it."

Even this most ardent and assured Lugosi enthusiast would not discuss him without comparison to Karloff. The specter of Karloff hovered over Lugosi's fans just as it followed Lugosi; and phrases such as "Boris Karloff, though technically a better actor..." were almost obligatory. Comparisons of the two were apt; but the tacit admission that Karloff was the more talented was always present. This defensive attitude is perhaps one of the more lingering legacies bequeathed Lugosi by his fans.

Thus in the first decade following Lugosi's death, his fans placed him on a pedestal of dubious foundations – a stage performer behind the times and oblivious to the absurdity of his roles; a limited actor trading on his personality, able to play horror but not comedy. Such vulnerable credentials could not long go unchallenged. Lugosi's one unassailed hold on greatness was Dracula. But waiting in the wings was another Englishman to challenge even this claim.

1965-1975: Decline and Isolation

In 1967, Carlos Clarens wrote in *An Illustrated History of the Horror Film*:

"It is useless to debate whether he was a good

actor or not; Lugosi was Dracula: the actor's identification with the part is complete. He may not conform to the Stoker description, but he left an indelible mark on the role and, consequently, on the horror film as well... as Count Dracula, he neither asked for nor needed the audience's sympathy. To his other roles – mad scientist, necromancer, monster, or merered herring – he brought a kind of cornball, demented poetry and total conviction... Lee may indeed be the better actor but Lugosi pretty permanently claims the part."

In itself, Christopher Lee's performance in the 1958 film, *Horror Of Dracula*, would have secured him a niche in horror film history. That single role would not have hoisted him as a serious contender to Lugosi as the definitive Dracula. In 1965, Lee appeared in *Dracula, Prince Of Darkness*, and would appear as Dracula in five more Hammer films by 1973. To date he has now played a vampire on screen in 14 films, much more than Lugosi. The resulting identification inevitably sired a cult proclaiming Lee as the foremost screen vampire. Just as Lugosi was ceaselessly compared to Karloff, so would he hereafter be compared to Lee.



Also in 1967 *Castle Of Frankenstein* published a short piece which described Lugosi's Dracula as "charming" and Lee's Dracula as "cinematic," and found Lee preferable. The ascent in popularity of Lee's Dracula and the relative decline of Lugosi's continued through the 1960s and early 1970s, leading FM to quip in its typical fashion that the two were "running neck and neck."

While the perennial Karloff-Lugosi rivalry was one of acting talent versus individual flair, the matchup between Lee and Lugosi became acting talent versus nostalgia. Ron Borst wrote in *Photon* in 1970:

"Lugosi's characterization, maligned more and more as the years pass by, is wonderfully in attune with the slow-moving Gothic stylization of the entire film."

The tendency to view Lugosi as a curiosity and a relic continued. Lee himself was quoted in 1972 (in Leonard Wolf's *A Dream of Dracula*) as stating:

"About the Lugosi Dracula. I was so disappointed. I was absolutely shattered... Dracula is played too 'nice' at the beginning. Practically no menace in the character... Lugosi's hands, too... he held them out stiffly... making him look like a puppet. His smile was not always sinister either."

Lugosi soon became a figure easily shuffled into the background. When Stan Lee's *Monsters of the Movies* produced a special vampire issue, an article was devoted to Lugosi, but the cover was jointly shared by Lee, William Marshall (Blacula) and Jonathan Frid (*Dark Shadows*). The short-lived weekly *Monster Times* certainly devoted less space to Lugosi than to other grand masters. When Lugosi finally made its cover for an all-vampire issue (by which time Karloff and Lee each had received two covers), not only was his portrait doctored so as to be comically unrecognizable, but the only piece concerning him was entitled "The Decline and Fall of Bela Lugosi." FM never reduced its coverage of Lugosi, but on one occasion even it faltered badly. FM's special Lugosi issue contained an important article to be continued in the following issue – the second installment reach print some two years later.

In that 1972 FM issue Michael Rosen wrote his defense of Lugosi's acting, quoted above. In addition to Lugosi's being "first and foremost" a stage actor, Rosen claims:

"Acting styles in general have changed since the late '20s and '30s. Acting on all levels was on the 'over' side back then, with emotion plainly registered on faces, impassioned delivery of dialog and accompanying physical gestures... the great stars of stage & screen adapted to the changing tastes. Lugosi was apparently unable to. Or perhaps he had no idea he was doing anything wrong... One often hears the complaint that Lugosi's characterizations never varied, that he was always some variation on Count Dracula. This is partially true... But after all, in America with his obvious accent how else could he be cast?"

Rosen tries hard to defend Lugosi, but armed only with the flawed arguments of the early monster magazines, he gropes for a convincing case. He works himself into several blind alleys – at one point he even describes *The Raven* as a subtle film. Finally, he all but admits his failure:

"Bela Lugosi has come very nearly full circle. His acting style, much in vogue when Bela became established in 1931, became sadly out of date, but now is very entertaining once more in a 'camp' sort of way."

In 1975 Lugosi's descent culminated in Donald F. Glut's *The Dracula Book*. Here, the dogmas theorized by Lugosi's early supporters are brought to their logical and damaging conclusions. Glut prefers the Draculas of Christopher Lee and John Carradine to Lugosi's. As with a good many critiques of Lugosi's Dracula, the core of Glut's argument is theatricality:

"Modern audiences sometimes snicker at the performance of Bela Lugosi, calling it hammy and artificial. We must remember that Lugosi was primarily a stage actor with a very poor command of the English language. He was accustomed to playing to the back rows of packed theaters. His style of acting was the result of many years upon the European stage. In the film *Dracula*, Lugosi was essentially recreating his stage role. Motion pictures were still developing their newly acquired voice and many performers and directors had difficulty distinguishing between stage and film acting... perhaps Lugosi fell victim to this problem to a greater degree than most actors. But even if he seems hammy by today's standards, he did play the role with sincerity and dignity, and in a language that was not his own. That was one reason why the audience of the time loved both him and the picture."

And the much quoted "unlearning fast" speech is repeated.

The Dracula Book does not stop there, and the excesses which follow become a simple hatchet job. In three separate passages Glut suggests that Lugosi adapted his Dracula from Hamilton Deane's – a strange assertion considering Lugosi only saw a Deane performance in 1939. Lugosi's performance in *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* is praised, but who was responsible for Dracula's reflection in a mirror in one scene? Glut poses, "perhaps Lugosi, tired and addicted to drugs, no longer cared." Arthur Lennig's biography, which *The Dracula Book* references, proves that Lugosi was not addicted to drugs in 1948. Of the meritless films of which Lugosi, Carradine and Lee have each made their share, Glut suggests that Carradine and Lee have taken such roles only for the money. Not so for the apparently more egotistical Lugosi:

"By accepting parts in low-budget horror films made by companies like Monogram and PRC, Lugosi maintained his star image."

By reviewing some of the worst films of all three men in such detail, Glut unwittingly makes one fact clear – Lugosi alone of the three never compromised in the role of Dracula.

The greatest sin of *The Dracula Book* is omission. Glut, through his friend and literary agent, Forrest J Ackerman, has access to Lugosi's own scrapbooks. From these scrapbooks, Ackerman originally unearthed the "unlearning fast" speech, and Glut himself uses them in *The Frankenstein Legend*. According to FM, these scrapbooks contain hundreds of references to Lugosi's numerous stage appearances as Dracula. Alas, none of these surface in *The Dracula Book*. Glut's chapter "Dracula Dramatized" review stage treatments of Dracula and contains fine background material on Hamilton Deane's productions, and long quotes from John Carradine and even John Abbott on their Dracula performances. The sole reference to Lugosi's appearance in the play is:

"*Dracula* opened at New York's Fulton Theatre in October of 1927, starring a newcomer to American theater named Bela Lugosi as The Count and also featuring Jukes as Renfield."

Likewise, concerning the films, Lee is quoted often and at length, but the sole quote from Lugosi is the "unlearning fast" speech.

The Dracula Book is not typical of the treatment accorded Lugosi. Still, the general favor with which it was received is indicative of an attitude prevalent in the horror cults, which afforded the actor a degree of veneration and very little real respect and admiration.

That Lugosi's Dracula would experience a relative decline in the face of the new vampire films was inevitable. The trappings of the '50s and '60s vampires – the fangs, the red contact lenses, the finales of disintegrating corpses and gory impalements, the technicolor blood, and the buxom females on wide-screen made Lugosi seem bland by comparison. By the '70s, however, these embellishments became familiar gimmicks, and lost their shock value. Thus, equally inevitable was the re-emergence of Lugosi's Dracula as a distinctive alternative to their modern offerings.

And there was one undeniable fact that could not be ignored. It was stated by Carlos Clarens in 1967 and well voiced in again 1975 in *The Vampire Film* (by Alain Silver and James Ursini, updated and republished in 1993):

"Of all the incarnations of undead Transylvanian noblemen, from the spectral Max Schreck to the

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panther-like Christopher Lee, from slender, soft-spoken John Carradine to the heavy set, belligerent Lon Chaney, Jr., from the sinister German Robles in Mexico's 'Nostradamus' series to the effete Robert Quarry as the campish Count Yorga, no other has so dominated the role and infused it with his personal mannerisms as the Hungarian Bela Lugosi. It is somewhat ironic that Lugosi, should so completely become Dracula that the countenance and speech of the quasi-fictional Carpathian royal should be so irrevocably linked with Lugosi's pallid expressions and peculiar rendering of what Stoker dubbed a 'strange intonation.' It could be argued that Schreck was more

cosmetically terrifying, that Carradine has more grace, Chaney more brute force, Lee more erotic energy and sheer presence, that any of them were closer in some way to Stoker's original idea; but whenever a comic breaks into a vampire parody, the accent and florid gestures, the thick 'Good Evening' are unmistakably Lugosi's. The perpetration of the Lugosi Dracula via televised airings of his old pictures and advertising in which mimics sell hair spray, throat remedies, and even hot dogs; and in the face of dozens of later 'Dracula' adaptations, is so dominant a factor that a reader of the novel who has experienced all of this may

(continued)

try to visualize Stoker's own version of the character—stockier, older with bushy grey hair, a moustache and a 'very strong' face—only to have the image of Lugosi caped and top-hatted, coming out of the fog to mesmerize a doomed flower girl, force its way in."

1970-1980: Renaissance

As the nostalgia craze of the '60s evolved into the '70s interest in 20th century American culture, Lugosi's work attracted the attention of a new breed of writers. Lugosi was now to be regarded not only as a horror film star, but also as an element of pop culture, a symbol of an age and an architect of modern folklore. Writers viewed Lugosi in the light which best suited their particular purposes.

"With barely proleptic symbolism," writes Frank McConnell in *Rough Beasts Slouching* (an essay in 1972s *Focus on the Horror Film*):

"Bela Lugosi's *Dracula* is the Roger Chillingworth of lend-lease: the strange, suspiciously epicene emissary from that Europe which had hardly been suspected, and whose sheer presence jolts us from our comfortable insularity. The invocation of Hawthorne is not inappropriate: for what *Dracula* comes to destroy is an insularity not primarily of space but of history. In one of his finest speeches in the film, Lugosi's *Dracula* says to the scholar who has just unmasked his vampirism: 'For a man who has lived not even one lifetime, Van Helsing, you are very wise'...*Dracula* carries the conscious weight of cumulative history, of more than one lifetime, into a society that was just making a public discovery of the closure of the future...the clash of time-senses comes across brilliantly in the movie, due primarily to the exquisite miming grimace of Lugosi's movements. Where everyone else walks and gestures with 'normal' theatricality, he choreographs himself in slow motion."

Leonard Wolf in 1972s *A Dream of Dracula* finds Lugosi's *Dracula* to be created by:

"An aura of evil so deeply understood as to wipe all sense that an impersonation was taking place."

Allan Richards, in an apparently serious piece in a 1972 issue of *Crawdaddy*, sees Browning's film as an anti-semitic allegory with Lugosi representing the Old Testament God.

Also in 1972, the new temptation to surround Lugosi with literary imagery was parodied in Brock Brower's novel, *The Late Great Creature*. Simon Moro, Brock's fictitious, eccentric horror star, recalls Lugosi in what is both a wistful tribute and a merciless jab:

"I suppose we all fizzled. My—what shall I call us?—My generation of monsters. Even those who were never too serious. Lugosi, for one. He had the best role. Something very priestly, eucharistic about a straight out and out vampire. Bela had the mannerisms, the Transylvanian suavity, the cape work, all that, but I don't think he ever really felt the urges. I worked with him once. 'Gila Man Meets *Dracula*.' You won't have seen it. Even you. Never released. That bad. Bela never did know much English, always learned his lines phonetically. Gave him the right voice, like an echo in a crypt, and that queer emphasis, but I knew somewhere in the back of his drugged Hungarian brain, he was always asking, 'vot does in hell dis mean?' In the eighth reel, we have this terrific fight. My venom, his canines. But it was really two losers losing. The opium eater versus the pill-head. You know what he did, really, when he went for my

throat? Kissed me, something very maternal about Bela. At heart he was more a witch than a vampire. I always thought the part for him was Medea, carving up the kiddies, weeping away, dropping tears and little toes into the wine-dark sea."

These musings on the Lugosi persona were matched by growing approval and appreciation among film historians. Donald Willis, in 1972s *Horror and Science Fiction Films*, finds Lugosi's *Dracula* "enjoyable if stagy," Dr. Mirakle "bizarrely hammy," investing the film with a "crazy power," and Count Mora "grand throughout." Ron Borst in *Photon* cites Lugosi's "magnificent acting" in *White Zombie*. William Everson, in 1974s *Classics of the Horror Film*, also admires this performance, as well as Lugosi's appearances in *Son Of Frankenstein*, *Return Of The Vampire*, and *Island Of Lost Souls*. Of Lugosi's Vitus Verdegast in 1934s *The Black Cat*, Everson remarks:

"Lugosi, too—never as good an actor as Karloff, hindered by his lack of understanding of the subtleties and nuances of the English language, but capable of extremely good things at times—rises to the occasion with one of his best performances. It is a concentrated duet all the way, and supporting players matter little."

The horror and science fiction magazines also joined in the new praise of Lugosi. Writing in *Photon* in 1971, I assessed the same performance:

"The portrayals of *Dracula* and *Ygor* may be the finest examples of Lugosi's talent, but from a strictly dramatic viewpoint, the actor never surpassed his work as the tragic hero of *The Black Cat*."

In the same article I discussed Lugosi's Dr. Vollin of 1935s *The Raven*:

"When the film staggers to its chaotic climax, and Vollin goes uncontrollably mad, Lugosi's performance, which can only be termed as pure ham, reaches an insane zenith. Some reviewers find both the dialogue, such as the near-famous 'Poe—you are avenged!', and Lugosi's rendering of it ridiculous and unbelievable. This opinion is just, but no matter how harshly one chooses to criticize the film, there is no denying that Lugosi unleashed is a joy to behold."

No one expressed blanket praise for all or even most of Lugosi's work. Still observers were finding much that was unique and powerful in his acting; and his non-*Dracula* roles were at last receiving frequent attention in print.

Thus, the '70s saw the cultural historians finding new meaning in Lugosi's *Dracula*, and the film historians voicing new admiration for Lugosi's other performances. These separate trends were woven into a grand Lugosi manifesto by Arthur Lennig. Lennig had written the profile of Lugosi and the critique of *White Zombie* for *Classics of the Film* in 1965, and published an in-depth analysis of *The Raven* in a 1973 issue of *Film Journal*. In 1974 came his masterwork, *The Count, The Life and Films of Bela "Dracula" Lugosi*, the first hard cover Lugosi biography. This book contains a wealth of biographical information, most of it published for the first time, but its real thrust is its exhaustive analysis of Lugosi's American film career. Particular emphasis is accorded the three "perfect" performances in *Dracula*, *White Zombie* and *The Raven*, but each of the actor's appearances is given its due.

Lennig's introductory chapter is a masterful summation of the Lugosi mystique:

"From a purely aesthetic point of view, his films are mostly beneath contempt. A few of them are of

some thematic interest, and others offer a skillfully manipulated mood, but what saves the majority of them is inevitably Lugosi himself....one does not pity Lugosi, one respects him, even in his madness and evil-doing...Lugosi's (scientist) is essentially a diabolist, a half-mad poet. He has the insane energy of a man concerned only with his own demented experiments, one completely indifferent to the welfare or even the lives of others... Lugosi's films dealt with the night of human ambitions, an area that the bland Hollywood fare would not recognize. The golden quest for life eternal was one aim of the Lugosi scientist; the other was revenge...Lugosi's scientists, in particular, had cosmic schemes: to pursue their experiments for the glory of science and occasionally to rule the world as well. Bitter paranoids, they puttered away in their labs, disdained most of mankind, and dedicated themselves to proving how right their theories were. As soon as their plans began to succeed, the scientists would again become interested in mankind, but only in how to control and punish it for a previous lack of respect. Sick, maybe, but fun."

Lennig follows with detailed accounts of the individual performances. The classic roles are discussed at such length that succinct expressions of the author's opinion are difficult, though Lennig, of course, has great esteem for *Dracula* ("an extraordinary characterization, one that would remain unique in the annals of the American screen"), Dr. Mirakle ("only Lugosi shines through the tarnish in all his demonic splendor,") *Murder Legendre* ("the definitive interpretation of this type of villain,") Dr. Vollin ("his definitive mad scientist,") and *Ygor* ("probably Lugosi's greatest character role and overall one of his finest performances, proof that he had far greater range than was revealed by the vampire and mad-scientist roles to which he was so often reduced.")

For the lamentable bulk of Lugosi's output, Lennig sets himself to the impossible task of extricating Lugosi's portrayals from the dismal movies that contain them. This labor of love unearths some unnoticed aspects of these justly overlooked films. Remarks like "Lugosi, in a surprising moment of charm and with a touch of his continental weltschmerz..." and "at this point Lugosi provides a moment far more inspired than anything else in the picture..." do not always find their mark. Also, Lennig unleashes a clear prejudice against Karloff ("except for Karloff's unusual and indeed rather ugly face"), and occasionally offers simplistic notions ("Lugosi played weird roles for so long that he began to believe he was a cross between vampire, superscientist and a creature of occult powers.") Overall, The Count is a brilliant achievement and at long last establishes a firm critical foundation in the simple fact that in his films and roles quality, Lugosi was a consistently effective and frequently innovative talent.

Lugosi's position in horror film history could not be considered fully defined if Lennig's rousing tribute was not matched by a less complimentary reckoning of equal quality. If Lugosi had truly emerged in the 1970s as worthy of serious attention, his detractors, like his supporters, would have to find maturity.

William Raitt (in a book review of 1975s *Dear Boris*) chooses the familiar forum of comparing Karloff and Lugosi to offer a unique perspective of both:

"In Karloff there was what there never was in the somnambulant Bela Lugosi, a consciousness of the evil he was forced to do. These two immortals of horror represent polar opposites of awareness in much the same way that Chaplin and Keaton do in comedy—the one awake to what is

going on but unable to reflect it in his conduct, the other asleep and moved by some power not himself."

David Pirie, in his superb *Vampire in the Cinema* (1977) attacks Lugosi not for his weaknesses, but for awesome, misdirected strengths. Pirie's devastating exposition is the perfect counterpoint to Lennig's detailed commemoration:

"The fact is that Stoker was well aware of the danger of making Count Dracula into a ludicrous and stagey caricature, but Browning and Lugosi were not. The Dracula they invoked is simply a cardboard villain who, by virtue of the new technical resources of the cinema and Lugosi's unusual qualities as a personality, was able to make an enormous impact on the picture-going public. But in doing so, he sacrificed the one quality which Stoker had consciously or unconsciously sweated to instil into his creation: the quality of ambiguity...but Lugosi's Dracula announces his growing brutishness from the first time he opens his mouth. He is a thug, and as such his capacity to threaten is drastically limited."

What sets Pirie apart from other Lugosi detractors is that he expresses an admiration for the actor's talents but sees him trapped by these very virtues and not by the Dracula stereotype:

"This does not mean, of course, that Lugosi did not exude a memorable and venomous power as a screen presence. His greatest gift as a performer was his energy. He would channel the same excessive intensity of evil into every role he played. And the results were always the same: highly distinctive yet quite one-dimensional...Lugosi's Dracula-style left no room for development. A sexual element was implicit...but it was a heavy-handed and superficial sexuality consequently there was no direction it could take except that of self-parody. Lugosi often protested that he was trapped by the role. It is hard to imagine how he would ever have been able to exist as an actor without it."

Finally, Pirie views Lugosi as neither a prime mover nor a nonentity in horror film history, but rather as a major detriment:

"Lugosi was frozen in a striking bravura posture, the living tableau of a silent stage actor trapped in modern sound movies. It is precisely because Lugosi was an anachronism, allowed to flourish by an accident of genre history, that he exercises such a fascination, even at this distance. His exaggerated gestures and diction stand out with a dazzling clarity from the pale and more modern shadings with which he was surrounded, making that looming malevolent shape into the ultimate stereotype of all heavies. As a personality, as a phenomenon, as a star, he was remarkable. As an influence on the emergent horror film, struggling for freedom from stage melodrama, he was disastrous."

The pro- and anti-Lugosi camps of horror film historians had become complementary: if the legacy could not inspire harsh attacks like Pirie, it had no need of affectionate praise like Lennig; if it was to sire supporters, it must also sire detractors. The dynamics of his legend were at long last on solid ground. His work could be admired without reverence or blind adulation, criticized without pretensions or blind clichés.

For the Lugosi-fan, the 1970s ended with the publication of Richard Bojarski's *The Films of Bela Lugosi*. Like Robert Cremer's *Lugosi, The Man Behind The Cape*, which appeared in 1976, Bojarski's book is basically factual and contains little original



commentary on Lugosi's performances. But in 1980, a "The Films of" book from Crown Publishers was almost a requirement to claim true screen immortality.

Had film history stopped in 1980, with three hardcover books to his name, Lugosi could have claimed victory. History may pause, but never stops.

1980-1990: Before the Deluge

The late 1970s began the era of blockbuster trilogies — *Star Wars*, *Aliens*, *Indiana Jones*, *Poltergeist* and their many clones. And the classic monsters had new competition from Jason, Freddy Kruger, the nightmares of Stephen King and their clones. The resourceful Count accommodated admirably to the new times. At his best he became a tragic Byronic figure (as in the Badham/Langella version) or a romantic hero in search of a lost love (in George Hamilton's spoof, and most recently in Coppola's extravaganza) or found new life in his

cinematic roots (1979's *Nosferatu*).

Not surprising that less attention was paid the old classics and the grand masters, Lugosi included. The centennial of his birth, as well as of Karloff's and Chaney, Sr.'s passed with rather little fanfare. Their names continued in print, for oversized pictorial histories of the horror film appeared quite often. These usually gave Lugosi his due, but the excitement of the 1970s was missing.

One exception was William K. Everson's 1986 sequel *More Classics of the Horror Film*. On the topic of Lugosi, it's hard to believe this book was written by the author of 1974's *Classics of the Horror Film*. That Everson was rather analytical and dissecting in his observations. In the sequel he is quite nostalgic. Everson unearths some of Lugosi's almost forgotten work — *The Thirteenth Chair* ("Lugosi not only made the most of his dialogue, overplaying here, underplaying there [by Lugosi stan-

(continued)

dards at least], but added interesting nuances via his use of body language", *Chandu the Magician* and *Mysterious Mr. Wong* ("delicious Bela Lugosi performances"). He finds new praise for *Murders In The Rue Morgue*.

"It is a major joy to watch – and listen to – Bela Lugosi as he delivers some of his choicest lines and best speeches with that musical diction and curious hesitation that was such a distinctive trademark of his. It remains one of his most malevolent performances."

Everson even finds affection for Lugosi on poverty row, such as *Bowery At Midnight* ("Bela rises to the occasion with magnificent aplomb") and *Voodoo Man* ("Lugosi does achieve moments of pathos and sincerity quite remarkable in a low budget outing like this one").

Just as the monster magazines of the 1950s and 1960s had saved Lugosi from obscurity, the fan magazines of the 1980s again did him great service. A series of valuable interviews with surviving contributors to the 1930s-1950s horror and science fiction films reached print in various periodicals. Not only did these interviews greatly expand the available information on these films, but they rejuvenated the entire fan magazine concept. No more were they just rallying points for fans; they now were seriously engaged in uncovering and documenting new facts.

Natural of new commentary on Lugosi's acting is contained in these pieces. By far the most famous is Curt Siodmak's interview in *Fangoria*:

"Bela never could act his way out of a paper bag. He could only be Mee-ster Drac-u-la, with that accent and those Hungarian movements of his. And he was a pest."

For Lugosi's legacy, the real value of the interviews is the insight into the difficult conditions under which he worked. Robert Clarke told interviewer Tom Weaver that:

"Poor Bela had such terrible problems with his back, and he was on drugs because of it. During the time that I was involved on *The Body Snatcher*, he hardly came out of his dressing room unless the assistant director called him. They had a daybed in there, and he was flat on his back on that couch nearly all the time. He talked very little to anyone, and obviously he wasn't well at all. It was very difficult for him to perform."

Likewise, Harry Thomas remembers (concerning Edward D. Wood, Jr.):

"I'd say to Woody, 'What are you going to do with all this film?' and he'd tell me, 'I may make another Lugosi picture and not even use him.' But it was kind of a sad thing: Lugosi, in two of the pictures I worked with him on, did not know what he was doing. One day Bela came to me and said, 'Harry, vot am I doing?' I said, 'well – you're acting!' 'But vot kind of acting?' He tells me to look this way, that way, stare out this way. I have no script, I don't know vot I'm doing! Eddie would direct, at random, whatever came to his mind."

In general the new information unearthed in the 1980s sired a growing awareness that whatever Lugosi had achieved on film he often did with little help from behind the camera.

1990 and Beyond

Tom Weaver's fan magazine pieces are collected in *Interviews with B Science Fiction and Horror Movie Makers*, published in 1988 by McFarland & Company. That collection began a series of

McFarland books that have greatly contributed to horror film history. Those most pertinent to Lugosi now include *Universal Horrors* (1990, by Michael Brunas, John Brunas and Tom Weaver), *Karloff and Lugosi: The Story of a Haunting Collaboration* (1990, by Gregory Mank), *Boris Karloff* (1991, by Scott Nollen), *Cinematic Vampires* (1992, by Joe Flynn), and *Poverty Row Horrors!* (1993, by Tom Weaver). The wealth of detailed and hitherto unpublished information contained in these books on the making of his films will ultimately overhaul the entire Lugosi legend. Generally, they document his low salaries, tight schedules and tense relations with the studios. Also, they show how difficult it must have been for him (and Karloff and many others as well) to give a coherent performance amidst the constant rewrites to accommodate the censors and the front offices.

Criticisms of Lugosi span a wide range in the McFarland series. He comes off best in Nollen's *Boris Karloff*. Nollen admires Lugosi in *The Black Cat* ("one of his most realistic achievements"), *The Raven* ("outrageously overplayed...perfectly suited to the mood"), *The Invisible Ray* ("one of his most convincing and sympathetic performances") and *Son Of Frankenstein* ("an acting triumph"). Lugosi gets rather rough treatment in Flynn's *Cinematic Vampires*. Flynn greatly admires John Carradine's Dracula, and regrets that Lugosi was tapped for the role in *Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein*. In that film Flynn finds Lugosi "appearing foolishly awkward."

In *Universal Horrors* Lugosi gets at best mixed reviews. The Brunas and Weaver appreciate him in *The Invisible Ray* ("uniquely mesmerizing"), *Son Of Frankenstein* ("unlike Dracula it hasn't aged a bit"), *The Wolf Man* ("makes the most of the opportunity") and *Ghost Of Frankenstein* ("for once Lugosi's slow theatrical delivery pays off and he manages to undercut the silliness of the business at hand"). They cede that Lugosi "gets the biggest laugh" in 1941's *The Black Cat*, but muster only qualified praise for the 1934 classic ("overripe and indulgent performance...still manages to be both sinister and poignant"). Qualified praise is a generous description of their thoughts on *The Raven* ("we are grateful to be spared the spectacle of Lugosi's sing-song delivery of the line 'Nevermore... Nevermore... The Lost Lenore! The Lost Lenore!' Yet despite these shortcomings, Richard Vollin is one of Lugosi's most memorable screen roles"). In Lugosi's early work at Universal, they find little merit, panning both *Dracula* ("a flawed, hammy, stage performance and far from the best work that Lugosi did in films") and *Murders In The Rue Morgue* ("ranting and raving in that thick accent, running his words and phrases together, leering, making sweeping gestures, indulging in double takes and all the other silly gyrations which make him some fans' favorite bogeyman").

Universal Horrors gives Lugosi's Monster in *Frankenstein Meets The Wolf Man* a definite thumbs-down. "The effect on Lugosi's already shaky performance was disastrous" – this "effect" was post-production editing. As filmed Lugosi played a blind monster with lots of dialogue; as screened the monster has sight, but is mute. This transformation was accomplished entirely by the film editors, who rendered Lugosi's performance meaningless. Without seeing the missing footage, criticism is moot, but *Universal Horrors* does give a good account of what happened in the editing of *Frankenstein Meets The Wolf Man*, with Philip Riley's 1990 publication of the original shooting script as part of his Universal Filmstrips Series, the complete story of Lugosi's butchered performance as the Monster is now available. Alas, what's missing is the footage with the performance itself.

If *Universal Horrors* is quite rough on Lugosi, Gregory Mank's *Karloff and Lugosi* is quite gener-

ous. Mank, who writes background information for Riley's filmstrip series, has a confusing comment on *The Raven*:

"Lugosi's real-life intensity, accent and bombast seemed all too real, all too much of the man himself; and this, in strange irony, made him all the more difficult to take seriously."

Otherwise, he finds many gems in Lugosi's performances: *International House* ("a wonderful comic heavy...marvelously holding his own"), *The Black Cat* ("a wonderfully melancholy and intense performance"), *The Invisible Ray* ("one of Bela's finest portrayals. Wise, cool, stable, Bela never once overacts...none of the ham that creeps into Karloff's performance ever invades Lugosi's"), *Son Of Frankenstein* ("more remarkable than the makeup...is Lugosi's performance"). Mank's praise for Lugosi's brief appearance in *The Body Snatcher* is almost as long as the role itself:

"A genuinely effective portrayal, vile, creepy far more creatively played than the mad doctors he was then doing for Monogram. One suspects that *The Body Snatcher* was one of the few times in the '40s that Lugosi ran up against a director who actually directed him, and didn't just prop him up in front of the camera and told him to 'play Lugosi'...Bela's pathetically tragic Joseph is one of his best screen performances. His final scene with Karloff is one of the most haunting in the career of both actors."

All these McFarland books primarily look at Lugosi in his best, but not *Poverty Row Horrors!*. That book has some cute comments on Lugosi's acting, both complimentary ("Lugosi's not bad in *Bowery At Midnight*, although someone should have told him he was only playing two parts, not four") and less so ("It's the script's fault, not his, that he's called upon to stand, threateningly and for absolutely no reason...but the silly faces he makes are pure Lugosi"). The book's real value is that it further documents the hardships he faced in trying to eek out a performance. The incoherent scripts, the shooting schedules and budgets that allowed no rehearsals or retakes, the lack of talent or experience or technical competence on either side of the camera must be considered in assessing the actor's work.

The McFarland series is currently dominating serious study of vintage horror films, but there are other sources as well, too many to discuss in detail here. There's magazines like this one, and many new and revived books. *The Vampire Film and Horror!*, originally published in the 1970s, were recently reissued.

Among the new studies is Walter Kendrick's 1991 *The Thrill of Fear*. On Lugosi, Kendrick first compares him to the Chaney, Sr.:

"Chaney's sham vampire in *London After Midnight* suggests how different the history of horror movies would have been if the great actor hadn't died in 1930, before a Dracula film could be made. Chaney's man in the beaver hat is horrific in every detail but especially in those of his face, with its mouthful of sharp teeth and round staring eyes. He is purely a creature of darkness, at home among cobwebs and nowhere else. Lugosi's Count, by contrast, glides across drawing rooms and crypts with equal aplomb; no charnel-house air clings to him. His face is rather handsome, in a vaguely decadent lounge-lizard style, and he never shows a fang. Lugosi attempted to evoke ideas of aristocratic corruption rather than the literal rot of the grave. He created a long-lived type – in which he found himself hopelessly typecast – but he also neglected the deepest source of the vampire's power to chill."

Comparing Lugosi to Karloff, Kendrick states:

"At first Lugosi did nearly as well, escaping from Dracula to star as Murder Legendre in *White Zombie* and Dr. Mirakle, the killer ape's master, in *Murders In The Rue Morgue* (both 1932). But his Hungarian accent, his supposedly mesmerizing eyes, and especially the black cloak he swirled so well combined to hem him in; they were too specific, too closely identified with a single character, to allow him Karloff's relative freedom."

Another recent publication (1990) is Andrew Tudor's *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie*. Tudor is a bit bored with Lugosi's mad doctors, finding Dr. Vollin "simplicistically and irreducibly mad." But for Dracula, Tudor writes:

"To get at the distinctive contribution of Dracula, it is necessary to examine the movie's construction of character and narrative, and in particular to attend to its conception of Count Dracula himself and Bela Lugosi's singular reading of the role. Retrospective criticism has treated Lugosi much as it has treated the film as a whole – puzzled that such obvious overstatement could have made so considerable an impact. But the more interesting question is to ask what it was that Lugosi's Dracula actually introduced to the movie-going public? Although vampires were not entirely new to the cinema in 1931, it was Lugosi's version that was to prove most influential."

Tudor briefly compares Lugosi's Dracula to his predecessors in *Nosferatu* and *London After Midnight* and draws a familiar conclusion:

"Constantly clothed in full evening dress, only the strange rhythms and accents of his verbal delivery and the studied lighting of his 'hypnotic' close-ups serve as permanent reminders that he is both malevolent and alien. Simultaneously monstrous and human, he represents a force of evil supernatural concealed behind a sophisticated and conventionally attractive human exterior, a force that coexists with and preys upon our secular world."

Like Tudor's book, David Skal's two recent books, *Hollywood Gothic* and *The Monster Show* are mainly histories and cultural studies. He provides many new historical details on Lugosi. His only comment on a performance is on *Bride Of The Monster*:

"As the film's mad scientist, Dr. Eric Vornoff, he delivers a monologue about the inequities that have driven him to the godforsaken hell where he cultivates demonic resentment and plots a monomaniacal revenge. It is a quintessential Lugosi moment...Lugosi often played roles that offer a thinly veiled commentary on his own circumstances. Lugosi's mad scientists, often double-crossed in business and driven into desperate straits, take on a poignant resonance when viewed as unintentional allegories."

Allison Graham makes a similar observation in her essay "The Cult of Banality" (in 1991's *The Cult Film: Beyond All Reason*). She thoroughly trashed Edward D. Wood, Jr.'s films and notes Lugosi's "pathetic Freudian slips" in Wood films. [Note: The soliloquy in *Bride Of The Monster* is neither an unintentional allegory nor a collection of Freudian slips. Lugosi improvised the dialogue as the camera was rolling, and knew exactly what he was doing.]

At long last in the 1990s, the women were heard from. Joyce Carol Oates (novelist and lately a contender for the Nobel Prize) has an essay in 1992's *The Movie That Changed My Life*. For Oates

that movie is *Dracula*. She writes:

"The figure of Count Dracula as played so coolly by Bela Lugosi is priestly; his formal evening wear, high starched collar, ankle-length black cape suggest the vestments of a Catholic priest, as do his carefully choreographed movements, the precision with which he pronounces words, enunciates syllables."

In 1992's *Dracula* Claire Haworth-Maden writes (quoting Elliot Stein):

"The film is graced from beginning to end with some of the most distinctive music ever heard – the voice of Bela Lugosi... Lugosi's unforgettable accent, offbeat phrasing and minatory pauses – as much as his hypnotic eyes – were essential to his aura of dignified balefulness."

Folklorist Norine Dresser, in *American Vampires* (1990) also speculates on Lugosi's voice, but from quite a different perspective:

"The playfulness attached to the Ameri-



can concept of the vampire is very much connected with the Bela Lugosi portrayal of the Count speaking with a Hungarian accent...people are making fun of Lugosi when imitating his speech. At one level this may be true. On the other hand, imitating that accent allows the opportunity to play with dialect. It is fun to talk that way. As an informant stated, 'It always has amused me because I loved Bela Lugosi's voice. I was always fascinated by his voice.'"

Dresser quotes Lennig at some length ("...he seems to speak with great effort, as if he were forcing a mouth long dead to move again. His consonants are stressed and the vowels are heavier and more drawn out...The overall effect is guttural, strong, masculine, somehow the very personification of evil...The pause before as well as the inflection of the word 'welcome' provide a certain ambivalence, a combination of greeting and foreboding, cordiality and superiority, sincerity and irony...). But Dresser sees Lugosi's voice as the vehicle which transformed Dracula from a horror monster to a ubiquitous icon of pop culture:

"...the exaggerated Hungarian accent adds to the zaniness of the Count's presence in a fast-food restaurant. Note, too, that the Count on *Sesame Street* also uses the accent. The creators must have decided to retain this

element of the Lugosi portrayal because it ameliorates some of the more sinister connotations of the shadowy Count. A fan described the actor's characterization as follows: 'The way Bela did it, you always knew that you could get a good laugh and that you were not in the presence of Satan.'"

I am forever grateful that neither Barrymore nor Chaney, Sr. nor anyone but Bela Lugosi was cast in that role. And I am equally thankful to be here during this wonderful era to be tracking Lugosi! McFarland publishes at least one informative book per year. At about the same pace, MagicImage Filmbooks is releasing Philip Riley's Universal Filmstrip Series, which to date includes six Lugosi films. Folklorists and cultural historians find Lugosi a fertile topic, as does *Cult Movies* magazine and all the others. Lugosi continues to pop up in unexpected places – from a Joyce Carol Oates essay to a Tim Burton film.

To Be Continued

The amazing aspect of Lugosi is the controversy which continues to surround his acting – a controversy unrelated to the wide variation in the quality of the films themselves. Even if his poverty row films and minor supporting roles are discarded and we focus only on his dozen or so best opportunities, there's little consensus among film writers. The opinions – as this modest survey has shown – range from greatness to garbage. Incredibly, the closer we focus on Dracula the more heated the debate becomes. For his Ygor roles, there is argument on his achievement, and most writers find Vitus Verdegast a noteworthy performance. For Lugosi's Dracula opinions span from "unique in the annals of the American screen" to "flawed, hammy, stagey." In print the controversy can be traced to about the mid-1960s only a few years after monster magazines invented the study of horror film history. The debate was quietly underway long before then. Judging from film and theatre reviews, it probably began on September 19, 1927, when *Dracula* starring Lugosi had a pre-Broadway tryout in New Haven.

Why? We can agree on all the great horror performances, but not on Lugosi's Dracula. I won't again delve into Lugosi's screen persona; obviously others have done so often and well, and will do so in the future. Perhaps Andrew Tudor asks the right question:

"But the more interesting question is to ask what it was that Lugosi's Dracula actually introduced to the movie-making public?"

In closing this article, I'll suggest another aspect that only emerged through assembling the many passages quoted above. In 1974, Arthur Lennig posed that Lugosi's attraction is not because he personifies our fears, but because he embodies our dark wishes. Lennig was speaking mainly of the primitive urge for revenge. There are far darker desires. In 1986, James B. Twitchell wrote in his landmark study *Dreadful Pleasures*:

"Along with all the other phobic explanations for the attraction of horror (fear of insanity, death, madness, homosexuality, castration) the fear of incest underlies all horror myths in our culture that repeatedly told for more than one generation...I believe they enjoy long life because, within the horror that surrounds these monsters, there is a sexual truth preserved by our culture: a truth about incest so important that we feel uneasy explaining it, let alone even dreaming it."

Twitchell spends the bulk of this book detailing his case, showing how each of the classic horror stories fits into his thesis. Here is not the place to debate that thesis (though I will note that pieces on

(continued)

sexual abuse and taboos often take the titles of horror stories. A 1994 *New York Times* article on the sexual abuse of children is entitled "Monster in the Mist" and deals with a new book called *Remembering Satan*. "Monsters Among Us" is a 1992 *Frontline* segment on sex offenders. The topic of sexual abuse has adopted the language of horror).

Dreadful Pleasures hardly mentions Lugosi (or any other actor), but in discussing 1943's *Son Of Dracula*, Twitchell writes:

"In the 1940s no one yet realized what the 'look' was, but in *Son Of Dracula* they learned what it was not. Lon Chaney, Jr. looked like the perpetual son, and he could act like one in his Wolfman roles, but Dracula is anything but a child—he is only a parent, more specifically, only the father. Bela Lugosi was right for the part because he could only act like a father speaking in that ponderous diction with that threatening finger and using that look from above."

In her introduction to Bojarski's *The Films of Bela Lugosi*, Carroll Borland, (whose daughter/father relationship with Lugosi in *Mark Of The Vampire* was removed from the film by the censors) notes:

"...the important difference between Lugosi's Dracula and those who have imitated him. No other actor has succeeded in including that subtle appeal which made his vampire so dreadful that one was both at-

tracted and repelled, loathing yet forced to love. Is this not the ultimate horror? Lugosi needed no superficial fangs, claws or bloody teeth. His victims willingly gave themselves to discover the dreadful consummation achieved behind the swirling concealing cloak. Modern films, replete with naive explicitness, can never rival the ultimate suggested horror."

Lisa Mitchell, writing in 1976 in *FM* of her real life meetings as a teenager with Lugosi from 1953–1956, says basically the same thing:

"I found his gaze wonderful and awful. It was almost assaulting, practically malevolent. The eyes narrowed, squinted you might say, penetrated mine and held there...without a smile! And yet, wasn't there a hint that they had crinkled once and might do so again?...I found myself looking forward to seeing him. To be frightened and attracted at the same time – why, of course: the essence of the Dracula appeal."

Joyce Carol Oates in the piece quoted above further writes:

"The probable reason that *Dracula* the film made such a strong impression on me as a child has to do with the fact that Bela Lugosi, in his ethnic exoticism, somewhat reminded me of my maternal step-grandfather...It was Grandpa's wedding portrait that suggested

his ethnic kinship with Lugosi, the set of the eyes, the heavy arched brows, the thick stiff black hair, a portrait taken when he was in his early twenties, and dashing handsome, Magyar exotic."

It's a cliché of 1930s Hollywood that physical seductions could only be done by Fred Astaire, who did so through dance. Was there another actor in top hat, white tie and tails who could perform darker deeds, using only "an aura of evil so deeply understood" (Leonard Wolf's phrase)? Is that why viewers, more than 60 years later, can never agree on what they've seen? Is that why, just as film writers seem to reach some consensus – good or bad – on Lugosi's Dracula, controversy erupts yet again?

One of the many quotes attributed to Lugosi on Dracula (from Claire Haworth-Maden's book) is:

"It is women who love horror. They hoped that I was Dracula. It is the embrace of Death their subconscious is yearning for. Death, the final triumphant lover."

Dracula might not agree. In his first meeting with Mina Seward and Lucy Weston he warns them that there are far worse things awaiting them than Death. Lucy was enthralled at once and immediately fell under the Count's powers. Mina would soon follow. ■

What was this unseen menace that struck in the dark?

Shrieks!
Chills!
Shudders!



From the eerie gloom of this terror-haunted house, this dread menace claimed its fear-frozen victims!



Dracula (1931): Addenda to the Children of the Night

by Garydon Rhodes

It is much easier at this time to note the changes and impactive nature of Lugosi's *Dracula* than to actually conceive a world that existed without the aristocratic and bloodthirsty mix of Bram and Bela. From "Count Chocula" cereal and a *Sesame Street* character to George Hamilton and mass marketed videocassettes, the Lugosi appeal has continued to live in one form or another. Easiest of all to the discerning fan is perhaps to grow weary of the great number of books and articles on the subject of Browning's film and the vampire cinema that are sometimes trite and often inaccurate in their information. The fascination with Lugosi and the film is well-founded; some of the historical literature is not.

With Coppola's remake of the film, a new group of books and magazine pieces have again cropped up, often repetitious in nature. More is to be learned from the new film itself, which in one way showed how individual the storytelling can be. The Hamilton Deane/Tod Browning perspective against Coppola's shows continued life in the story, but it also shows similarity in that dramatic height in both (at least atmospherically-speaking) are in their halves. This can be traced back to Stoker, of course, as simply part of the novel's structure.

The past few years have certainly brought the indispensable guides on the 1931 chiller to the bookstore, however. Where Robert Cremer and Arthur Lennig in their Lugosi biographies provided useful information, and Calvin T. Beck and Carlos Clarens have given astute criticism, the sum of these is still incomplete.

The most essential research work on the film is now without a doubt David Skal's book, *Hollywood Gothic* (W.W. Norton, 1990), which investigates the earlier F.W. Murnau film *Nosferatu* (1922), the Hamilton Deane play, and thus leads into stories about Lugosi's avid campaign for the part in Universal's "Super-production." Everything from major details of the making of the film to obscurities like the real-life identities of two of the three femme vampires turns up in what is one of the most intelligently-written books on the cinema.

Skal's work also includes insightful lectures on *Dracula* given at universities and bookstores across the country and even helping to locate in Cuba missing portions of the Spanish version of *Dracula* (1931). Moreover, Skal's follow-up book from W.W. Norton in 1993, *The Monster Show*, gives additional information on the film, along with well-founded social analysis on the horror film in general, making it an additional necessity. Skal is also behind a St. Martin's release of the original script to the stage version, complete with rare photos, as well as working on a Tod Browning biography.

Next to *Hollywood Gothic*, the 1990 Magidimage *Dracula* book (volume 13 of their "Filmscripts" series) is another major source of rare photos, valuable production information, and the pressbook from the 1931 release. Pages from an unused Louis Bromfield script are reprinted along with a transcript of Lugosi's 1931 speech over radio station KFI about the film. All this is in addition to a reproduction of the script used.

These sources on a bookshelf work well alongside MCA's gorgeous Laserdisc issue, the latest



The Daily Oklahoman, February 15, 1931.

VHS release, and the 1992 video issue of the '31 Spanish version. Decoratively speaking, licensed products of *Dracula* are available from inexpensive toys to high-priced models. And, at least at Halloween, sharp prints of *Dracula* are turning up at local theaters once more.

Yet, with all this work on one of America's most popular films, it is increasingly clear that more work can potentially be done in studying not just the critical aspects of Browning-Lugosi film, but more importantly the pieces of history that are still missing from the jigsaw puzzle.

Standard horror film history, for instance, allows that Lon Chaney Sr. was the only consideration for the role until cancer took his life, thus opening the door for others. While this is true to a point, Lugosi's name was connected with cinematic possibilities some time before Chaney died in 1930. The *Los Angeles Times* of July 22, 1928, asked simply, "Could the motion picture, with the advantage of a broader scope by the camera, out-thrill the stage production of *Dracula*?" Lugosi told the newspaper that he felt that talkies could make the screen version successful, adding, "Picture audiences are apt to shake off any alarmed feeling which results when the emotions are excited by reminding themselves they are at a movie."

Furthermore, *Motion Picture Classic*, in October of 1929, was even more sure of this possibility by mentioning that Hollywood rumor said Lugosi was being considered for the role in a planned

film. This was printed along with a striking, full-page photo of Bela from the stage version, captioned, "The Kiss That Kills."

A year later, Bela would have the role, and trade papers claimed Carl Laemmle would be "lining up talent for the other roles." During the second week of September, Edward can Sloan was officially signed after having been in the play for some 94 weeks. Dwight Frye was decided upon about the same time. Later, *Billboard* reported on the cast completion with the final addition of Frances Dade, fresh from a Ronald Colman movie called *Raffles*. Tod Browning was reportedly making "rapid progress" of the film. Helen Chandler was mentioned, yet her next major notice in *Billboard* (in a January 1931 issue) told of her being picked as lead for the MGM film *Daybreak* with Ramon Navarro. Among her major successes listed were *Salute* and *Mother's Boy*. Oddly, no mention is made of *Outward Bound* (the 1930 film that apparently nabbed her the role of Mina Harker) or of *Dracula* itself, which was less than a month away from release as major film.

As the release of the film neared, ideas for exploitation abounded. All of a sudden, *Dracula* was the picture "you will want to see with someone who is scary." The original coming attraction no doubt aroused interest, even though a scene used of van Sloan, now thought to have been his screen test, was not even in the film. Another scene that was included in finished prints was of Chandler confessing to Manners that she had drank the blood of the Count, but the trailer for some reason features an alternate take of this.

Further exploitation included over 100 stores in the New York area alone featuring window displays and copies of the Grossett and Dunlap Photoplay edition. The books could be found in department store, at over 40 of New York's circulating libraries, and displays at some 75 area grocery stores. Various photo enlargements and advertisements made up the displays, which later showed up in other key cities.

Dracula did turn up in Milwaukee on February 14 of 1931. Fred S. Meyer, managing director of the Alhambra Theater, put together a tie-up between *The Wisconsin News* and his theater. Cash prizes and theater passes were offered as part of a ghost-story competition. Rules said the story had to have occurred within a 100-mile radius of Milwaukee and could be no more than 200 words. Meyer's contest caused much interest and stirred up a good deal of publicity.

Certainly a part of standard *Dracula* history is that the film opened on St. Valentine's Day of 1931. Publicity ads in New York even reprinted a telegram from Tod Browning asking that the film open there on the twelfth rather than a day later... which was Friday the 13th. Most all of the nation's theaters in fact didn't get *Dracula* until much later though. It was March 19th, for instance, that Chicago finally booked the chiller at the RKO State Lake Theater. Ads in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on March 20th proclaimed, "yesterday thousands acclaimed it the thriller of the year. DON'T MISS IT!" The film in Capone's territory was "good to the last gasp." Mae Tinee's review for the paper was less favorable though, saying the "direction was not at all what it should have been, considering that Tod Browning megaphoned and I wonder why?" Lugosi was a "weird looking creature," yet Edward van Sloan as "Dr. Helsoing(sic) does a better job." Moreover, Tinee found the movie's framework "too obvious; its attempts to frighten too evident; its dialogue too creaky."

Los Angeles didn't see it until March 27th when it opened at the Orpheum along with a 75 artist vaudeville and a sports newsreel with Johnny

(continued)

Farrel called "Golf." Newspapers readers were told that "his kiss was like the icy breath of death... yet no woman could resist." Furthermore, it was a picture "that rises to gasping heights of passion and terror!"

Houston was a little more optimistic when it finally opened on April 9th, saying in the ad "You'll declare this is your lucky day." The RKO Majestic featured the film with vaudevillian Hal Jerome. The *Houston Post-Dispatch* misspelled Bela as "Belga" in their review, but called him "Fascinating." Helen Chandler "does well enough as the girl victim, a part that requires little acting." David Manners though was "stiff and self-conscious." No mention was made of Frye. On the whole, it wasn't felt that the film was as eerie as the stage production, but the celluloid version was "taken more seriously by the audience and is given extraordinary settings..." One of the Majestic's ads for a midnight preview claimed just the opposite, however, saying the "play was great but the picture is far greater."

Where did *Dracula* open during the second week of February? In addition to New York's Roxy (whose manager called it a "little unpleasant") and Milwaukee's Alhambra (who later remarked the film had "good appeal here"), the film opened at Washington's Rialto on Valentine's (where it rated a "hold over") and, oddly, at Oklahoma City's Midwest Theater. An article in the *Daily Oklahoman* claimed the city was holding the "world premiere" of the film (not quite true, of course), and ads urged readers to "be among the first in Oklahoma City to boast of braving the unknown terrors of *Dracula*. You'll be glad when the theater lights are turned on again!" And, while the theater manager claimed it was "just the picture for this house," ads on February 15th claimed it was "so fascinating you simply don't dare to even breathe!"

And what of the small towns in America? If Oklahoma City screened it on Valentine's Day, for instance, a mid-sized Oklahoma town like Ardmore would have to wait until a "special preview" on June 4th. Several towns like this would get *Fifty Million Frenchmen* (the Olsen and Johnson comedy) before *Dracula*, and reviews of this comedy by then would usually mention Lugosi's small part, even though he didn't receive on-screen billing. *Women Of All Nations* also beat the bloodthirsty Count to many areas, and one ad for this comedy with Edmund Lowe, Victor McLaglen, and Bela Lugosi, included mention of *Dracula* finally on its way to the theater.

Dracula did find mixed appeal at some movie palaces, such as the Emboyd in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where the film was merely "fair," and it was the vaudeville that kept them "coming in here." The Palace in Jacksonville, Florida applauded "good work, but mighty scary." Meanwhile, of course the prestigious film *Cimarron* was in nearly every city, the color film *Viennese Nights* (which had Lugosi in a bit part) was making the rounds to mixed responses, and *The Bat Whispers* (1930, directed by Roland West) was still making the rounds in areas like Little Rock, Arkansas.

Regardless of when it played local theaters, *Dracula* was successful with moviegoers but received mixed reviews. *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, and many others have been reprinted in various texts, and most reviews show generally the same pattern. Lugosi and Frye are praised, by an overall "not as good as it should be" feeling pervaded. *Billboard* on February 21, 1931, rejoiced, "it has been done splendidly" Lugosi gave a "brilliant" portrayal, while Chandler and Frye (in that order) were "outstanding." While that trio got "special commendation," others in the cast "help capably." The print seen by the reviewer at NY Roxy was 6,978 feet...75 minutes.

9:30AM
11:30PM
DRACULA
OPENS TODAY 9:30 AM
HIGH MOMENTS! SHARP EXCITEMENTS! IN A
PICTURE THAT RISES TO GASPING HEIGHTS
OF PASSION AND TERROR!



His kiss was like the
icy breath of death
...yet no woman
could resist!

What is the lure of
Dracula? ♦ Where does
he go at night? ♦ Where
does he go at daylight?
♦ Who is this strange,
awful man, dead 500
years, and yet alive?

**The story of the strangest pas-
sion the world has ever known!**



A UNIVERSAL PICTURE with
Bela Lugosi, David Manners, Helen
Chandler, Dwight Frye, Edward Van
Sloan, Herbert Bunston, Frances
Dade and Charles Gerrard
Directed By TOD BROWNING
Produced By CARL LAEMMLE, Jr.

IT'S A THRILLER YOU'LL
NEVER FORGET!

EXTRA ATTRACTION "FORE"
1st of the great RKO-Pathe Sport Series
GOLF with JOHNNY FARRELL

35
TO 1 PM

ON THE STAGE
75 ARTISTS in "WORLD OF PLEASURE"
Created and Staged By JACK LAUGHLIN

The Chicago Daily Tribune, late March, 1931.

In March of '31, Phillip Scheuer of *The Los Angeles Times* gave a west coast viewpoint, noticing the "exquisite perception" of Freund's camera work. Yet, a disappointment at "posed" shots, "artificial" dialogue surfaced, along with an idea that "music, perhaps, would have helped." Unlike *Billboard*, who said *Dracula*'s "spook-thrilling consistency is bound to disturb many a young kid," Scheuer found the film "occasionally laughter-inspiring" and also "overly explicit."

Director Browning didn't have the chance to take too many bows, as he left in late March for a European trip to "England and France, and possibly Italy and Spain." Papers reported he had just signed a long-term contract with MGM and upon return would start work on a new picture "from an original story written 'by himself.'" No details were given, but this couldn't have meant *Freaks* (1932), which was based on Tod Robbins' story "Spurs." A reporter's mistake or an another unmade classic?

Another under-researched aspect of the *Dracula* craze were the multiple stock theater and vaudeville versions without Lugosi that were turning up throughout the U.S. While *Billboard* was printing the final casting of the film, a live version was at the Alvin Theater in Pittsburgh from September 23-27, 1930. The Teck in buffalo from September 29-October 4 featured a version, as did the Lafayette

of Detroit from October 20-November 1. The Shubert of Cincinnati from November 3-8 had performances, followed by the Shubert Rialto of St. Louis (November 10-15), the Shubert of Kansas City (November 17-23), the Selwyn of Chicago for a few weeks in December, then again at the Shubert of Cincinnati, bringing in the New Year from December 29 to January 3, 1931. The Lyric of Boston had four weeks of *Stoker*, from the second half of January to February of 1931.

More stage versions turned up at the Maryland Theater of Baltimore (February 9, 1931), the Windsor in New York (February 16-21), the Carlton in Jamaica, NY (March 2-7), and the Walnut in Philadelphia (March 23-April 4, 1931.) What actors made appearances in these and their exact nature deserves further attention in the histories of the stage version of *Dracula*. Certainly though, the nation was neck deep with live vampires during the entire production and initial release of the cinematic version.

With tricklets of information still finding their way to fandom so many years after the fact, it certainly seems reasonable that more work is to be done. With groundbreaking efforts by such researchers as Skal, these possibilities have become reality. In the meanwhile, thanks to VCRs and improved prints, repeat viewings of Lugosi's *Dracula* show the greatest joy is the film itself. ■



Above: Houston Post-Dispatch, April 9, 1931;
Below: Daily Oklahoman, late February 1931.



STATE LAKE PALACE

OPENS 10:30 A.M. TO 2 P.M. OPENS 10:45 A.M.

DRACULA

BELA LUGOSI

DAVID MANNERS

HELEN CHANDLER

DR. ROCKWELL

A LAFF PILL FOR EVERY ILL

CASA & LEHN

in "The Hollywood Rush"

TED & AL WALDMAN

in "Blue-ology"

THE MERIDITHS

in "Dancing To Glory"

SERGE FLASH

King of Rubber Ball Manipulators

DRACULA IS SURE TO GET YOU TOO!

Thousands have been thrilled and fascinated by its weird terrifying story!

DRACULA

When Lived on the Crimson Kisser He Preals at Night from His Beautiful Victim!

GOOD TO THE LAST GASP!

And on the screen

Howling Comedy of Married Folks Who Step Out Only to Step in to a Lot of Trouble and Laughs

LONELY WIVES

EDWARD EVERETT HORTON

Esther Relston Laura La Plante Patsy Ruth Miller

The Chicago Daily Tribune, late March, 1931.

35c to 3 p.m. **TODAY 8:45 A.M.**

STATE LAKE

RKO

THE HUMAN VAMPIRE DRACULA IS HERE!

Dracula — Grandmaster of the Undead creatures — possessor of the strangest passion the world has ever known . . . lives on the kisses of youth — feasts nightly on the blood of the beautiful — and returns at dawn to his grave!

The weirdest, most terrifying character in all fiction — whose kiss is like the icy breath of death and yet no woman can resist it!

GOOD TO THE LAST GASP!

DRACULA

TED BROWNING'S GREATEST PRODUCTION
with

BELA LUGOSI

DAVID MANNERS HELEN CHANDLER
DWIGHT FRYE

From Bram Stoker's famous novel — and the
play adapted by Hamilton Deane
and John L. Balderston.



Vampire Legend Reversed By Universal Thriller

"Dracula." Universal's revived thriller starring Bela Lugosi, showing at the . . . Theatre beginning . . . is a story of those strange animated creatures commonly referred to as vampires.

Vampires rise from their graves at night with terrible abnormal appetites and prowl around in the light of a full moon, reducing their crazed victims to madness or death.

"Dracula" brings to the screen all of the marrow-chilling episodes in the life of Count Dracula. For five hundred years, the Count roamed the face of the earth afflicted with a strange and gruesome condition between life and death. He discards his apparent role of royalty when seized with an irresistible craving for human blood. During such lapses, Dracula prowls through the night as a blood-thirsty vampire laying waste his hapless victims.



Helen Chandler

Now appearing in
"Pride and Prejudice" says,

*"I get my shoes at
Frank Brothers*

Mezzanine Shop"

Young actresses true to the traditions of the legitimate stage are also fashion leaders.

That is why so many of our leading young players come to the Mezzanine Shop for their shoes . . . where the style and price are in accordance with the demands of smart young New Yorkers.

Frank Brothers

588 FIFTH AVENUE

Between 47th and 48th Streets, N. Y.

AMUSEMENTS

LEGITIMATE—BROOKLYN

LEGITIMATE—BROOKLYN

MAJESTIC

BROOKLYN

THIS WEEK
NOT A
MOTION PICTURE

O. F. WEE presents

DRACULA

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February 15, 1931, the New York Herald Tribune.

*The Story of The
Strangest Passion
The World Has
Ever Known!*



DRACULA

with Bela Lugosi,
David Manners, Helen
Chandler, Dwight Frye, Ed-
ward Van Sloan, Herbert Bun-
ston, Frances Dade, Charles Gerrard.

Produced by Carl Lummale, Jr.

*What Is The Strange,
Awful Lure of Dracula.
You'll Find Out When
You See It!*



A UNIVERSAL PICTURE



Play at the Fulton

Bela Lugosi



SERIAL BOX: BATMAN IN BLACK AND WHITE!



BATMAN WITH ROBIN THE BOY WONDER

by John Marshall

God I love Batman! I can't remember a time when I wasn't a Batman fan. Maybe when I was, like, a few days old I was more interested in eating and sleeping. But that's it. Ever since my brain was able to focus on something that wasn't squirting out milk, it's been focused on a TV or movie screen, a toy, or even - Gasp! Choke! - a comic book featuring Batman! I'm 30 years old and I love Batman as much as when I was a kid. If he was real I would turn queer just so I could love him more. Oh, you know what I mean. Stop shaking your head. Like you've never sat through an episode of the old Adam West TV show in your life. Like you've never seen any of the recent movies. Yeah, RIGHT.

Look, I'm gonna keep talking about why I love Batman for another couple of paragraphs, so if you just want to read about serials, skip down to

the paragraph that starts with the word "Anyway."

The appeal Batman has for me is that here was this guy who had this big tragedy and all, and instead of turning to drugs or booze or food or haunting the toy aisles at Wal-Mart looking for the short-packed figures, he got off his ass and pumped iron. And he read books. Generally he did the whole self-improvement kick, because he had turned his particular albatross into a magnificent obsession. Y'see, Batman isn't motivated by some lame-ass hack writer's character motivation of Using My Powers To Help People. Batman is motivated by one thing - HATE! Just like we all are, but we feel guilty about it so we swallow our hate along with pills and Twinkies TV and never accomplish anything. Bruce Wayne directed his hate into a positive force, smashing the faces of

gimps and slags who get away with their crap in real life.

The more screwed up society gets, the more of a catharsis Batman provides. In the fictional world of Batman, might and right are the same thing. In the real world, of course, he'd be some nut throwing jaywalkers off roofs. But unlike comic book geeks who think that comic book concepts can be transferred without alteration to movies, TV shows, and real life, I know that Batman is pure fantasy. And baby, what great fantasy it is! A world of hair-raising escapes, brilliant deduction, and non-stop action, set against backdrops of moonlit skies over open-air exhibits of giant working models of typewriters on which Batman and his outlandish foes do their Dance Of Danger. In other words, Batman kicks ass!

And those villains - whew! For nearly six decades (although by the time Mike runs this it'll probably be closer to seven decades) the best writers in half a dozen fields of entertainment have burned the midnight ink coming up with foes as colorful and obsessed as Batman himself. Even Batman's earliest enemies, (Dr. Death and The Monk) created by Gardner Fox, were a cut above the usual pulp villains. But when Bill Finger began writing Batman, that's when we got what are now called the super-villains: The Joker, The Penguin, The Riddler, Catwoman, Two-Face, The Scarecrow... the list is endless. ("Wait!" some of you non-Batman-experts are saying, "What about Bob Kane?" Yeah, WHAT ABOUT BOB KANE? Well, he was there too. And let's face it, without him there would be no Batman at all.)

ANYWAY Batman was a hit in the comics and it was only a matter of time before he appeared in that bastion of the cinema, the Weekly Chapter Play, or Serial as it's called. Batman actually hit the screen about half a decade before boring old Superman. Now revealed for the first time ever to *Cult Movies* readers is the lowdown on Batman's Saturday matinee adventures! Now, where are my notes?

Ah, here they are. Okay let's see...

Hey, look at this! The first Batman serial titled surprisingly, *Batman*, was directed by Lambert Hillyer, known to *Cult Movies* readers as the director of *The Invisible Ray* starring Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi, and *Dracula's Daughter*. Wow. Guy knows a thing or two about spooky scenes. His stars were Lewis Wilson as Bruce Wayne/Batman, who went on to do... uhh... and Douglas Croft as Robin, who played a young Lou Gehrig in *Pride Of The Yankees*. Their "Jap Devil" foe was Dr. Daka, the evil Japanese scientist, played by J. Carroll Naish. Remember, we were at war with Japan at the time, for reasons I can't quite recall (hey, it was fifty years ago, give me a break!). Naish was, as we all know, a big-time character actor who later appeared in films as diverse as *House Of Franken-*

stein (a major studio "B" film in the 1940s) and *Dracula vs. Frankenstein* (an Al Adamson quickie from 1969).

People who say they are Batman experts who really aren't are quick to point out how different the serial is from the comics. It is in some respects. Two, to be exact. In the serial, Batman leaves bat-tatoos on his beaten foes to let everyone know it wasn't the work of The Phantom or The Spider. He never did that in the comics. And it's also true that the Batmobile was just a regular car in the serial. When Batman artist Bob Kane visited the set he asked where the Batmobile was, the director indicated the car and said "You're standing in front of it!" or words to that effect.

Shades of Ed Wood!

But the truth of the matter is, not only was the first serial true to the comics in many respects, but also it helped create many set pieces and even characters who have become legendary.

About the time the serial was being filmed, there was a Batman newspaper strip. Between the strip and the serial several ideas were generated (probably cooperatively) that were later picked up by the comics. Alfred for one. Although he had originally first appeared in *Batman* #16, Alfred soon changed his look to resemble actor William Austin from the serial. Twenty years later, the TV show went one better, causing Alfred to recover from his previous comic book death! The Batcave was inspired by the name Bat's Cave, also first used in the serial, as was the staircase to the cave hidden by a grandfather clock, an innovation shared by the comic strip.

Bruce Wayne's girlfriend, Linda Page, was created in the comics and was faithfully transferred to the silver screen, with a slight alteration from being a nurse to a reporter.

The story concerned Dr. Daka's efforts to sabotage the war effort by brainwashing and zombifying important citizens and defense workers. He also likes to throw people into an alligator pit. Now *that's* how to kill somebody. None of this "lethal injection" crap. What we need today is more alligator pits! That would be cool. The serial is available in very crisp prints on a two-tape, economy-priced set from Goodtime Video. Unfortunately, they cleaned up some of the anti-Japanese commentary in the opening narration, apparently afraid of offending Japanese people (particularly Japanese-Americans) today. I used to have a multi-generational (i.e., hearable but not seeable) copy of the uncut, Jap-bashing original version. When I heard it was out on video, I recorded over my copy before seeing the "cleaned up" version. Sigh. And I don't want to hear about how I supposedly hate Japs from any limp-wristed readers, just because I wish I still had the Batman serial with racist slurs intact. I like racist slurs. They're like a shot of tequila for the soul. *Cult Movies* readers know the great admiration I have for the Japanese people, as evidenced in my two previous articles lavishly praising Johnny Sokko and Ultraman, and you don't get any more Japanese than that!

You could save yourself twenty bucks and tape the serial the next time it gets run at noon on Saturdays during the Saturday Matinee on American Movie Classics. And if you don't have cable, you might as well shoot yourself. You heard it here first, folks!

On The Set Tidbits: Bob Kane felt that Batman/Wilson was too fat, Croft/Robin was too old, and the uniforms were too baggy. But at the wrap party, he met a young actress named Norma Jeane. More on her later.

In 1948 we got a new serial featuring Batman and Robin called, amazingly, *Batman And Robin*.

This serial was great then and it's still great now. Not surprising, considering it was directed

"BATMAN" BALLY



Outfit a bally man in the garb of the Batman and send him through the streets of town. Attach sign to his back reading: **"The Batman Comes to Life on the Screen . . . See Him at the Rialto Theatre!"** Have your local Batman hand out heralds at all busy street corners.

by Spencer Bennett (*Blackhawk*, *Superman*, *Monster And The Ape*, etc. etc.). The star was the dashing Robert Lowery, star of *The Mummy's Ghost* (1946). Two new characters dropped by for the crime-smashing. One was from the comics. Police Commissioner James W. Gordon was played by Lyle Talbot, a B-movie staple, who went on to play Lex Luthor in *Atom Man Vs. Superman*. Talbot went on to appear in practically everything, from *Gamera The Invincible* to several of Ed Wood's better films.

The other new character was Vicki Vale, an inquiring reporter. According to Bob Kane, Vicki was transferred from the serial to the comics. I always thought it was the other way around. Vicki's pen-and-ink appearance was inspired by the actress Norma Jeane met by Bob Kane at the wrap party for the first Batman serial. Turns out he ran into her again later and did some sketches of her cavorting on a beach. These became the model for that comic book version of Vicki. And, of course, as we all know, that unknown starlet, Norma Jeane, grew up to become Jayne Mansfield and Mamie Van Doren.

On The Set Tidbits: At least the "Batmobile" was a black car, not grey as in the first serial, which

made Bob Kane a little happier. Robert Lowery later complained to Bob that he was typecast forever because of Batman.

The plot? A costumed super-villain called The Wizard has an invisibility machine and he, like, commits crimes with it, or something. There's lots of fighting and people getting murdered and shootouts with cops and stuff. This serial is a great way to start your day. It's packed with vitamins, minerals, and left hooks. It's also available on home video but you can also tape it off AMC for free.

The two serials were partially responsible for the Bat-craze of the 1960s as well, because Hugh Hefner was showing them at his Playboy club in Chicago in the early 1960s. This helped inspire the nation's cultural elite to consider the possibility of bringing back Batman for a new generation, a decision for which Adam West's landlord will be forever grateful.

Bat-Bibliography: This article would basically be just me ranting and raving about Batman in general if it weren't for *Batman And Me* by Bob Kane with Tom Andrea (Eclipse Books), *Batmania* by James Van Hise (Pioneer Books), and Joe Desris' incredible articles in the Batman comic strip reprint books (*Batman: The Dailies* vols 1-3 and *Batman: The Sunday Classics*) issued by DC Comics via Kitchen Sink Press.

About The Author: John Marshall is an uncensored pop cultural anthropologist. He has had over four dozen articles and reviews published in the likes of *Cult Movies*, *Collecting Toys*, *Film Threat*, *International Doll*, *Oriental Cinema*, *Collectible Toys And Values*, *Sentai* and more, most of which he actually got paid for. His film credits include a position as script editor on Roy Lumadue's Bard College Senior Project *Zombie Monster* (1992). He is the creator and publisher of the cult comedy comic book, *Mortar Man* (1993) which was compared by *Previews* magazine favorably with *The Tick*. His latest comics credit is a four-issue run in *Ninja High School* (Antarctic Press). He is listed in the 1993 edition of *Comic Book Superstars* (Krause Publications) right before Don Martin, and the new edition of Marquis' *Who's Who In The East*, which did not require a book purchase in exchange for a listing. He attended Sarah Lawrence college (Class of '87) and is included as one of the Eight Chairpersons Of The Board Of G.I. Joe collecting in James DeSimone's *The New Official Identification Guide To G.I. Joe* (1994, pg. 31). He's as handsome as he is talented, and his Mommy thinks he's just wonderful.



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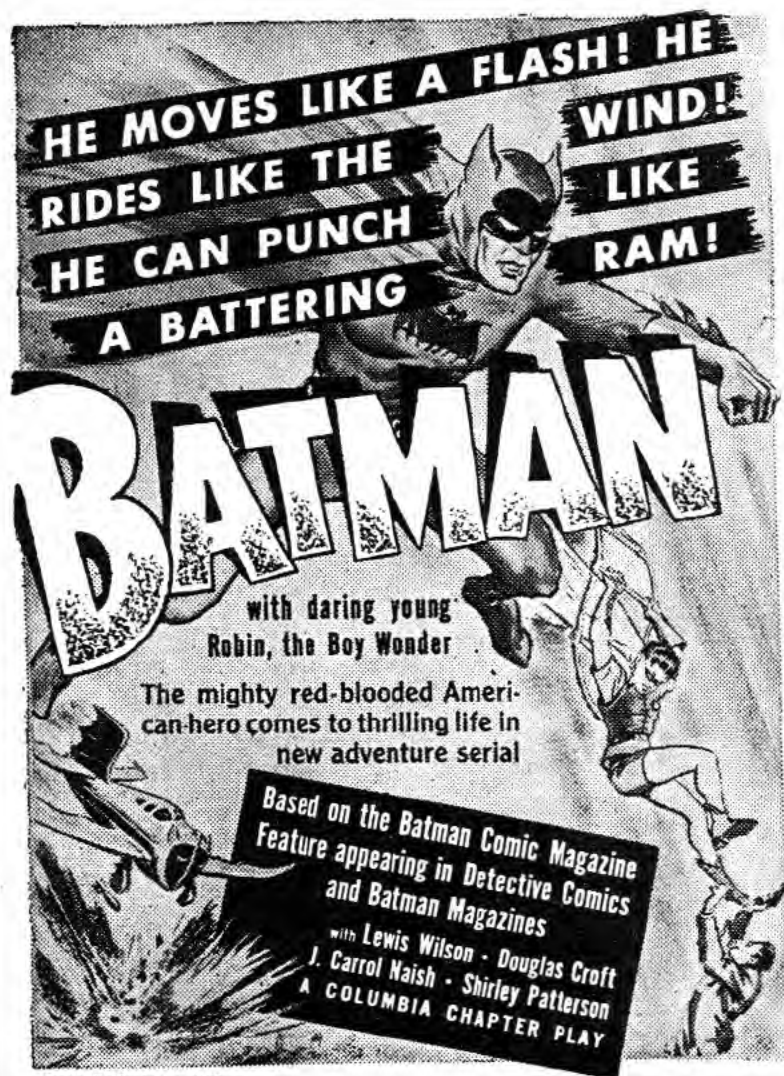
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(Feature)

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Republic's Special Effects Wizards: The Lydeckers

by Jan Alan Henderson



Theodore Lydecker (left) and brother Howard (center).

In its 23-year existence, Republic Studios represented a variety of things to a variety of people. For the rural moviegoers in the '30s, '40s, and '50s, Republic Studios provided constant entertainment in local movie theaters. Small town exhibitors found Republic's economical rental rates and no-nonsense approach to filmmaking both efficient and aesthetically suited to their communities.

To the big city cinema critics, though, Republic was a defenseless whipping boy, often dubbed "The Little Studio in the Valley" or "Repulsive Pictures." These critics nitpicked at stock shots, silly plots, and budget-minded productions.

Unlike the output of such independents studios as Monogram or PRC, however, Republic's product had the gloss and production values of A features. This was due in no small part to the wizardry of special effects technicians Howard and Theodore Lydecker. The two brothers worked in close collaboration to conjure effects that were both economical and believable.

Theodore Lydecker was born November 7, 1908 in Inglewood, New Jersey. His father, John Howard Lydecker, moved the family to Havana, Cuba, where as head engineer he supervised the raising and restoration of the battleship *Maine*. Howard Lydecker was born on June 8, 1911 in Havana. The family then moved to Balboa, California, where John's engineering skills were applied to the construction of tuna boats and the design of miniature golf courses.

The elder Lydecker eventually graduated from tuna boats to Hollywood movie studios, serving as assistant art director to William Cameron Menzies in the Douglas Fairbanks 1924 production of *The Thief Of Bagdad*. This may have been how young Howard was exposed to the motion picture business.

Meanwhile, the family remained in Balboa.

"The Great Depression was a devastating time for all of us," recalls Mrs. Theodore Lydecker. "Both Howard and Ted had graduated from high school, and Howard went to work immediately at the old Mack Sennett Studio, which became Mascot Studio, and finally, in 1935, became Republic. Ted had moved to Idaho and was a real, honest-to-goodness cowboy. Each of the brothers was making a dollar a day, but Ted, being a cowboy, got

bed and board on top of that. We were all lucky to survive."

At Mascot, Howard worked under the supervision of Jack Coyle, whose forte was art direction. An uncredited Coyle supervised Mascot's special effects department and held the same job at Republic in the studio's formative years. Coyle, Howard and cinematographer Ellis "Bud" Thackery, ASC did outstanding work in Mascot's 1935 serial, *The Phantom Empire*, an unprecedented combination of the Western, science fiction and musical genres. The creation in miniature of a lost city thousands of feet below the earth's surface was enhanced by the addition of miniature projection, a technique Thackery learned while working on *King Kong* two years earlier at RKO Radio.

Late in 1935, after Republic was created through a merger between Mascot, Monogram, Majestic, Liberty and Herbert J. Yates' Consolidated Film Industries, Howard summoned his brother Ted from the wide open spaces of Idaho. The last Mascot serial, *The Fighting Marines*, was released by Republic. It featured Howard's impressive "flying wing" aircraft, a convincing miniature which later appeared in two Republic serials.

Republic's first feature release was *Westward Ho!* starring John Wayne, followed by *The Tumbler* starring Gene Autry. In 1936, Republic produced the first of its 66 serials, *Darkest Africa* with Clyde Beatty. This was a showcase for the Lydeckers' special effects mastery. Miniature jungle cities, flying batmen, volcanoes and earthquakes, along with Clyde Beatty's world famous lion taming, made *Darkest Africa* most satisfying Saturday matinee fare. *Africa* is filled with thrills, chills, excitement, and the Lydeckers' first flying dummies, both full-scale and miniature.

While the serials are what the Lydeckers are best remembered for, this was not the brothers' main focus, as Ted Lydecker's son, George, recalls.

"To my father and Howard, the serials were more or less the proving ground for the gags in the features. They knew that the Saturday matinee crowd, which was basically kiddies, would be watching this, and be more easily fooled than the adults. That's not to say they weren't proud of

their serial work, but it's just that they held the features in higher regard."

Undersea Kingdom, also made in 1936, relied heavily on the special effects department. Starring Ray "Crash" Corrigan and Lon Chaney, Jr., *Kingdom* featured 12 chapters of undersea vessels, tanks, and flying miniature "volplanes." The Lydeckers' specialty was making the unbelievable believable.

The special effects department did not receive screen credit on the Mascots or the first 23 Republic serials. Howard, as head of the department, was listed for the first time in the titles of *Dick Tracy vs. Crime, Inc.* and the next seven serials in 1941-'42-'43. Theodore's name appeared alone on *Captain America* and the next three 1943-'44 serials. Thereafter the billing on features and the remaining 31 serials was "Special Effects - Howard and Theodore Lydecker." Together with Bud Thackery and later William Bradford, ASC they had a smooth-working team.

"Basically, what it boiled down to," George recalls, "was that Dad took care of the shop while Howard did the politics, like dealing with the brass from the front office. And that could get a little bit crazy! The executives were always on them for budget, and when they'd view the special effects rushes, some of the producers would ask why they had to waste so much film at the beginning of the shot before the actual stunt happened. This was a simple problem that the two of them overcame with the help of the editors. The reality was that those old Mitchell cameras took a while to come up to speed, so there was always dead film that wasn't leader before the effect took place. Since the execs at Republic couldn't understand why film was being wasted, the two of them went to the editors and made sure that the dailies were edited of the excess film at the beginning and ends, thereby fooling the brass, who had no technical understanding of special effects."

Ed Newman, George Lydecker's boyhood friend, remembers Theodore Lydecker's input into their amateur filmmaking adventures.

"You could say George and I lived every kid's dream," Newman recalls. "We had one of Hollywood's foremost special effects men as our technical advisor. When we first started making these films, there was an incident where Mr. Lydecker came home after work, and found that we had rigged his paint compressor to a miniature submarine in the pool, and were filming a sequence which had the sub rising to the surface and emitting an oil slick. Whereas most parents might have blown a gasket, he merely remarked, 'Very interesting project, boys. Be sure to put all the tools away.'"

"It was when he found out we were planning on including explosions in these amateur productions that he stepped in and began to take an active role. We would build the miniatures on our own, but when it came to detonating them Mr. Lydecker supervised and did the detonations himself, saving our fingers and his sanity.

"Due to our budgetary restrictions, our miniatures were just that - very small. With their work at Republic and the later stuff on their own, the Lydeckers would base the size of the miniature on

what speed the gag was to be filmed at. The larger the model, the slower the speed at which it was filmed. So we would build the miniature after school and wait for Mr. Lydecker. He'd bring charges and D cells home from the studio, and blow up our cars and flying saucers for us."

George Lydecker recounts that the pair's childhood enthusiasm for special effects was tempered by Mr. Lydecker's more practical outlook. "I used to tell my Dad, 'You've got the job all us kids dream about—building models and blowing them up!' And while Dad and Uncle Howard thought it was a great job, their attitude toward it was still that it was a job. Dad couldn't wait to retire so he could go camping and fishing."

"He also taught us the secret of how they flew everything—from airplanes to flying saucers to Captain Marvel to the Rocket Men, the same technique was employed," George adds. "So many incorrect things have been written about how this was done, it's laughable. It was great, because Ed and I were taught these things firsthand."

Republic star Frank Coghlan, Jr. played Billy Batson in the 1941 serial, *Adventures of Captain Marvel*. In his book, *They Still Call Me Junior* (published by McFarland Press in 1992), he gives an accurate description of how Captain Marvel flew:

"One of the contributing factors to the success of *Adventures of Captain Marvel* was the outstanding work of the Lydecker brothers, Howard and Ted. These young special effects experts made all the flight scenes of Captain Marvel completely believable. Part of this was accomplished by the use of a papier-mache dummy of Marvel that measured seven feet from head to toe. This dummy was used in several ways. I saw it suspended on a cable that must have reached nearly 200 yards as the Lydeckers had it photographed 'flying' down a location on Mulholland Boulevard in the Santa Monica Mountains. I swear this cable didn't sag an inch as the dummy of Captain Marvel traversed its length."

"Close-ups of Captain Marvel flying were duplicated on the sound stages with Tom Tyler himself suspended in a harness with invisible wires. Clouds passed behind him at high speed in this process form of photography supervised by director of photography Bud Thackery. The Lydeckers even had the dummy 'fly' from ground level to the roof of the Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles in one exciting scene in the serial. First you saw Tom Tyler make his spring into the air, then a cut of the dummy, then a shot of David Sharpe making his landing, then a close shot of Tyler, supposedly landing on the roof. When the film editors put it all together it looked very plausible."

Marvel was made to leap to high places by sliding the dummy down the wires (face down and feet first). The action was then reversed in the printing.

"The transitions of Billy Batson turning into Captain Marvel were also very lifelike," Coghlan continues. "While these transitions in the Superman serial were done by animation, ours were done in live action on film. When Billy said 'Shazam,' there was always a puff of smoke. When the haze cleared, there stood Captain Marvel ready to protect the innocent. To accomplish this there was always a trough of flash powder that was ignited electrically by the Lydeckers. When the smoke enveloped Billy, the cameraman would cut. Then Tom Tyler would take my place, the camera would turn, and the smoke charge would be set off again. As the air cleared this time, Tom would bound off to do what was required of him. After the film editors did their splicing, the transition was very credible. There were times on outside locations, when the wind was blowing from an unfavorable direction, that I lost a few eyebrow hairs from the unexpected powder flash in my



King Of The Rocketmen, 1949 Republic serial.

face."

"I think Frank's description of the papier-mache dummy is the closest you'll get," George Lydecker commented. "I read in a magazine in the mid-Sixties that the flying dummies were rigged on the shoulders and the heels with small pulleys. This is absolutely false. They always went for the simplest way possible. Less time, less pain. A pulley system with piano wire would have hung up in the wind nine times out of ten. All the flying models—people, planes, and flying saucers—ran on two lines, which were piano wire. The size of the model dictated the gauge of the piano wire. Eyelets were put into the models, with copper tube guides inside, so that the wires would run from—say, in Rocket Man's case—from shoulder to heel, with the copper tubing guiding the model."

"For lubrication they used talcum powder, which also cut the glare of the piano wire. The piano wires had wooden dowels at the top end, with the other end tied off out of frame, so the operators could make the dummies and models bank and do slight turns. By giving these lines slack and tension, landings and takeoffs for things like the rocket ships and planes could be achieved. They tried using miniature propellers on the planes, but found these didn't look right in the dailies, so they switched to wire brushes which photographed like real plane propellers."

"One of the trickiest situations with the models occurred during the filming of *The Flying Tigers*," George remembers. "They had gone to New Mexico and built towers on which to fly the Flying Tiger models and the models of the Japanese Zeros. As it was so early in the war, they had to rely on stories told to them by actual pilots, as to what the Japanese Zeros actually looked like. Their estimates were pretty close, seeing as Americans were just beginning to see this type of aircraft in actual combat."

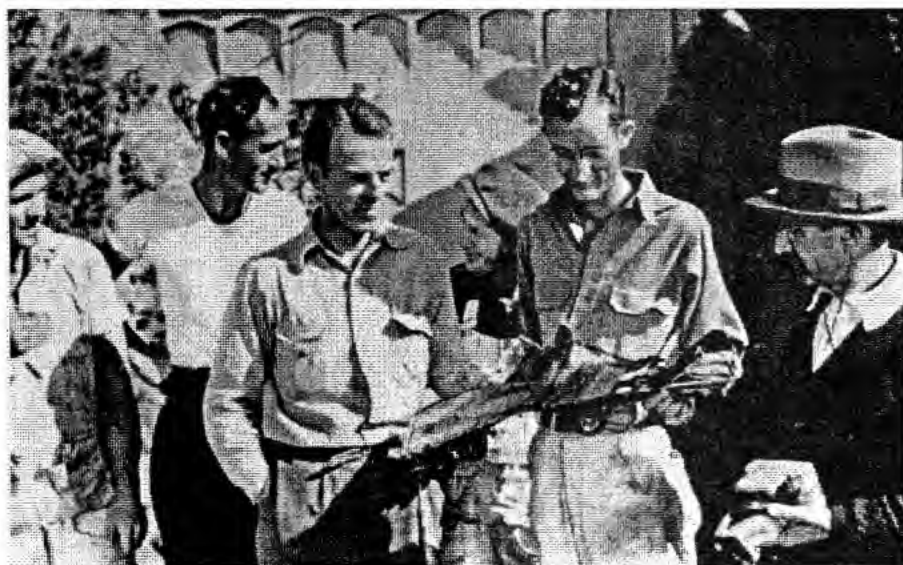
"One of the other problems was in-flight collisions and explosions. They would rig the models

with some sort of timers or fuses, which had a tendency to ignite the explosives either early or late, resulting in retakes. But the most humorous of these situations was actually with the crew, who after all the years of working with the brothers, would exit their tents and forget and walk through all the lines that had been set up before filming."

"Another incident on *Flying Tigers* involved a plane crash," George continues. "During a production meeting, they pointed out to the producers and director that if they waited until the model plane crash was filmed, it would be a simple matter for the prop men to match the full-size prop to the way the model ended up in the crash, insuring good continuity. Three weeks later, they found out that the full-scale crash had already been filmed, so they had to manipulate the model to copy what the prop men had done with the full-size plane. They hid the trick by blowing a lot of dust and smoke around when the model crashed. They also wiped out a camera when one of the planes went out of control."

"The capper on *Flying Tigers*, though, was when they took the special effects shots to the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences for Oscar consideration," George Lydecker remembers. "They were in the projection room with the entire award committee and began the picture. There was one 20-minute dogfight sequence, during which Farciot Edouart, ASC (head of the process department at Paramount) remarked, 'Do we have to sit through the whole goddamn picture?' Howard got his back up and said, 'Every airplane you've seen is a special effect. There's not one real airplane in any of this footage!' And Edouart called him a liar. Howard and Ted stormed out of the room and that was the end of that. They never again tried for Academy consideration."

"The truth of the matter was there were stock shots and newsreel footage interspersed with that of the models in *Flying Tigers*. But even the full size



Howard Lydecker (second from left) and brother Theodore (second from right).

mockups that John Wayne and the rest of the cast got into were just that—battery-powered mockups.”

These mockups were also employed in such serials as *Spy Smasher* and *Flying Disc Man From Mars* (for flying saucers taxiing out of frame).

Safety was always first. Republic star John Agar picks up the story. “When it came time to do all the work with the live charges on *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949), Howard and Ted took us through the scene

and showed us exactly where the charges were to go off and explained to us how big the explosions were. These guys were thoroughly professional and did everything in their power to avoid accidents, which happened in those days and still happens these days. They would take hours choreographing our runs through the sand with those charges set to go off.”

Agar’s costar in *Sands of Iwo Jima*, the late Richard (Captain Midnight) Webb, reflected on his work with the Lydeckers. “Both Ted and Howard were consummate professionals. There were none better in the business. But I do remember an incident where they squared off with the studio brass on *The Sands of Iwo Jima*. The producers wanted them to overload the charges, thus creating bigger explosions bigger. The concussion alone is a concern, not to mention the fire hazards and shrapnel. But one of the things I admired about the Lydecker brothers was that they quietly and politely told the brass that when they came to their senses they could find them in a restaurant across the street on Ventura Boulevard having coffee. Then, and only then, they could come over and discuss the alternatives for the shot.”

Another of the Lydeckers’ signature special effects was the “melting cave.” This effect was achieved by printing a portion of the film onto 4x5 stereopticon plates with a soft emulsion. Using heating elements placed under these plates, the emulsion runoff mimicked liquid lava. This effect was first explored by Jack Coyle and Howard Lydecker in the

Gene Autry Mascot serial *The Phantom Empire*, where they melted caves and cities. The trick was effectively recycled in such serials as 1937’s *SOS Coast Guard* and 1941’s *The Adventures of Captain Marvel, King of the Rocket Men, and Radar Men of the Moon*. Stereopticons were a popular replacement for coming attractions on film in the ‘30s and ‘40s. The budget-minded theatre owners could rent these plates for a fraction of the cost of the 35mm

trailer and project beautiful full-color studio ad mattes with canned background music as accompaniment.

In 1959 Republic Pictures closed its doors and the Lydecker brothers went their separate ways, in the professional sense. Howard worked with L.B. Abbott, ASC at 20th Century Fox on such projects as Irwin Allen’s feature *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea* (1961) and the TV series that followed (for which he received a 1965 Emmy), *It’s A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World* (1962) and the TV series *Lost In Space*. Theodore had gone from Republic to Disney, which he did not care for, and ended up at Universal until his retirement in the mid-’70s. Both brothers did miniature work for Howard Anderson Co. and other independent effects houses.

George Lydecker recalls, “Dad did the miniature bird models on Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds* (1963). He also worked on *The Andromeda Strain* (1971). I remember coming home late from school one day, and hearing Dad complain about some rookie stunt man who didn’t think Dad could rig a stunt correctly. This never would have happened at Republic. Guys like David Sharpe, Dale Van Sickel, and Tom Steele made it easy. There simply wasn’t the cooperation at Universal that there was at Republic. The entire crew knew their stuff, and I guess Dad missed that. He retired as early as possible and went fishing.

“Both Universal and Howard tried to get Dad out of retirement on two separate occasions. Universal sought his services on *Earthquake* (1974) but he refused. Howard had put together a deal to go to England to film *Sink The Bismarck* (1960) and

approached Dad, but to no avail.”

Howard Lydecker died of a cerebral hemorrhage while working on the ship miniatures for *Tora! Tora! Tora!* on September 26, 1969, and elder brother Ted passed away on May 25, 1990. Their pioneering, larger-than-miniature models, often photographed in natural light, provided the blueprint for the Lucas/Spielberg school of special effects. As Frank Coghlan, Jr. commented, “Even Spielberg and Lucas admit that their inspirations came from the old *Buck Rogers*, *Flash Gordon*, and *Captain Marvel* serials.”

Ed Newman reflects, “When you watch those old Republic pictures now, they hold up. This is because the actors, the crew, and especially the brothers made films based on their real life experiences, as opposed to the new generation of filmmakers, who base their cinematic efforts on what they’ve seen in the old films. The Lydeckers were guys who had more in common with, say, Ernest B. Schoedsack and Merian C. Cooper, who were real adventurers.”

John Agar muses, “Just imagine what the Lydeckers could do if they had the budgets and the effects gizmos of today!” ■





CULT MOVIE POSTER SALE!

HOT RODS, MOTORCYCLES, JUVENILE DELINQUENTS, TEEN HORROR, DRUGS, SCI-FI AND BAD GIRLS! All are staples of the golden age of exploitation films. The posters from this era have become highly desirable as an ever growing number of collectors and investors discover these artistic treasures featuring stunning artwork and campy lingo which have become priceless icons of American pop culture. We have been fortunate to find a small number of these rare, original 14" X 22" movie posters ("window card" size) which are all in excellent condition.

\$39 each or 3 for \$89 (unless otherwise noted)

- 1) **A HARD DAY'S NIGHT** (1964) **The Beatles** in their first movie! \$65
- 3) **KING KONG VS GODZILLA** (1963) The mightiest monsters of all time duke it out!
- 4) **I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF** (1957) **Michael Landon** as the juvenile delinquent turned into a werewolf by the mad psychiatrist! **INVASION OF THE SAUCER MEN**- Classic sci-fi about teenagers VS bulbous-headed aliens! \$55
- 5) **GO-GO MANIA** (1965) One of the earliest concert movies of the rock era. Features **The Beatles, Animals, Herman's Hermits, Spencer Davis Group** and more!
- 6) **THE RAVEN** (1963) **Vincent Price, Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre, Jack Nicholson-Roger Corman's** "Masterpiece of Terror!" Spectacular poster art!
- 7) **STRIPORAMA** (1950's) **BETTY PAGE!**, **Lili St. Cyr, Georgia Sothorn**- See the strip-tease queens in action! Rare **Irving Klaw** classic! **NAKED AMAZON**- "Raw Primitive Nudism Never Before Seen on the Screen!"
- 8) **ALL NEW TRIPLE TERROR THRILLS** (1950's spook-show) "In Person! **Dracula!** Alive! The Wolf Man! Direct From Hollywood! The **Frankenstein Monster** on the Loose! Giant Chiller Scream Show!" (Rare!)
- 9) **TWIST ALL NIGHT** (1961) Fabulous poster of sexy **June Wilkinson** in pin-up poses from this outrageous showcase for the twist craze!
- 10) **GIMME SHELTER** (1971) The classic **Rolling Stones** rockumentary! Great poster!
- 11) **BEACH PARTY** (1963) **Annette Funicello, Frankie Avalon, Brian Wilson, Dick Dale & the Deltones**- "Uninhibited Pagan Rites Performed Each Spring by Uncivilized Boys & Girls!" The very first of those great AIP beach movies.
- 12) **THE ANGRY RED PLANET** (1960) Early color sci-fi shocker with extraordinary special effects. Astronauts battle giant bat/rat/spider animals on Mars!
- 13) **DRAGSTRIP RIOT** (1958) **Connie Stevens, Fay Wray**- "Motorcycle Gangs, Hot Rodders, Death, Romance and Redemption!" **THE COOL & THE CRAZY**- "Seven Savage Punks on a Weekend of Violence!" Terrific poster art!
- 14) **THE WEIRD WORLD OF LSD** (1967) Remember sitars, Woodstock, damaged chromosomes? (Oops!) Outrageous anti-drug propaganda flick!
- 15) **THE BRAIN FROM PLANET AROUS** (1958) **John Agar**- A giant floating brain (with eyes!) takes over the body of a scientist as its first step in conquering Earth! (Eek!) **TEENAGE MONSTER**- "Teenage Titan of Terror on a Lustful Binge!"
- 16) **BIKINI BEACH** (1964) **Annette Funicello, Frankie Avalon**- The third beach party movie and one of the best! "The Beach Party Gang Goes Dragstrip!"
- 17) **BEACH BLANKET BINGO** (1965) **Annette Funicello, Frankie Avalon, Buster Keaton**- Best of the Beach Party movies! "Twistin', surf'n' and skydivin'!"
- 18) **DR. DRACULA'S LIVING NIGHTMARES SHOW** (1950's spook-show)- "You Dare Not Look Into His Eyes! On Stage & in Person! Beauties at the Mercy of Inhuman Monsters! Super Scary!" (RARE!)
- 19) **BORN LOSERS** (1967) The introduction of **Billy Jack** and one of the all-time best of the 1960's biker films! Fabulous poster with bikini girl and bikers!
- 20) **THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE** (1963) A sci-fi/horror classic! The fun begins when a mad surgeon keeps his fiancée's disembodied head alive and talking after their car wreck! **INVASION OF THE STAR CREATURES**- Amazon women under the control of vegetable-headed aliens! One of our favorite posters!
- 21) **CAREER GIRL** (1959) That buxom **June Wilkinson** shows off her best assets in this steamy poster! June heads for Hollywood to find fame and fortune and ends up at a nudist colony! "You Have to See it to Believe it!"
- 22) **REFORM SCHOOL GIRL** (1957) "Caged Boy-Hungry Wildcats Gone Mad!!!" **ROCK AROUND THE WORLD** "Wild Pulse-Pounding Rock & Roll!" A fabulous poster!
- 23) **ROAD RACER/DADDY-O** (1959) Hot babes, sportscars, drag racing and rock & roll: all in one fabulous poster! What more could you want?
- 24) **TEENAGE THUNDER** (1958) "Revved-Up Youth on a Thrill Rampage!" Teen story of hot rods, speeding and drag races! **CARNIVAL ROCK**- **Susan Cabot & Jonathan Haze** in **Roger Corman's** classic flick of rock & roll, mixed-up love, gamblers, arson and rockabilly!
- 25) **X: THE MAN WITH X-RAY EYES** (1963) **Ray Milland**- "Suddenly He Could See Through Clothes...Flesh...and Walls!" A knock-out poster!
- 26) **REPTILICUS** (1962) Before **Jurassic Park**, there was **Reptilicus!** "A Prehistoric Beast Born 50 Million Years Out of Time!" Run for your lives!!!
- 27) **HORRORS OF THE ORIENT** (1950's spook-show) "On Stage & in Person! The Hollywood Wolf Man! The Hunchback Igor! The Living Zombie on the Loose! NOTICE: We Urge You Not to Panic or Bolt From Your Seats! Sensational! Weird!" (RARE!)
- 28) **BLACK SABBATH** (1964) **Boris Karloff** in tales of a vengeful corpse, phone calls from the dead and a vampire! Creepy!
- 29) **GLORY STOMPERS** (1967) **Dennis Hopper** pre-"Easy Rider" as a motorcycle gang leader "Saddle Your Hogs and Ride, Man!" The ultimate biker poster!
- 30) **JASON & THE ARGONAUTS** (1963) A **Ray Harryhausen** masterpiece with **Todd Armstrong** and **Honor Blackman** searching for the Golden Fleece and meeting up with purple-winged harpies, a merman, a bronze giant and a 7-headed hydra!

- 31) **SORORITY GIRL** (1957) **Susan Cabot** as a high school helical whose specialties are catfights and padding (Hmmm!) **MOTORCYCLE GANG**- Twisted teenage sex, drag racing and gang violence! Like wow, Daddy-O!
- 32) **TALES OF TERROR** (1962) **Vincent Price, Basil Rathbone, Peter Lorre** in 3 Poe tales involving a live burial, a hypnotist and Price melting into an oozing faceless mess! A really outstanding poster!
- 33) **DIE MONSTER DIE** (1965) **Boris Karloff, Nick Adams- H.P. Lovecraft** thriller! "The Ultimate in Diabolism!" **PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES**- **Barry Sullivan**- Crazy astronauts, disembodyed aliens and giant skeletons!
- 34) **THE HALLUCINATION GENERATION** (1966) **George Montgomery** makes like **Tim Leary** and leads his youthful followers into a psychedelic pill party!
- 35) **ANGELS FROM HELL** (1968) "He's a Cycle Psycho!" Violent Vietnam vet starts motorcycle gang and battles rival bikers and cops!
- 36) **THUNDER ALLEY** (1967) **Annette Funicello**- "Their God is Speed...Their Pleasure is an 'Anytime Girl'!" Lurid poster art of party girls and hot rods!
- 37) **TIME TRAVELERS** (1964) Excellent sci-fi story of scientists who journey into the post-nuke future! "SEE: Women Who Use the Love Machine to Alay the Male Shortage!" (Kinky!) Fantastic sci-fi/horror poster art!
- 38) **THE BIG TNT SHOW** (1966) One of the best 1960's concert films! Features **The Byrds, Donovan, Ronettes, Bo Diddley, Lovin' Spoonful, Ike & Tina** & more!
- 39) **A BUCKET OF BLOOD** (1959) **Roger Corman's** predecessor to "The Little Shop Of Horrors" with beatniks, coffeehouses and gruesome "sculptures"! **THE GIANT LEECHES**- Humorous leeches capture girls and suck their blood! (Yuck!)
- 40) **CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED** (1963) Eerie well-made chiller about demonic space-seed children who seek to rule the Earth! (Yikes!)
- 41) **HOUSE OF USHER** (1960) **Roger Corman's** first Poe movie! **Vincent Price** buries his sister alive in this classic chiller!
- 42) **THE LONGEST DAY** (1962) **John Wayne, Henry Fonda, Rod Steiger, Robert Mitchum, Sean Connery** and loads more in this all-star classic WWII blockbuster!
- 43) **MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH** (1964) **Vincent Price** as a Satan-worshipping prince in **Roger Corman's** best feature film!
- 44) **THE PIT & THE PENDULUM** (1961) **Vincent Price, Barbara Steele**- Price becomes convinced that his scheming wife has been buried alive. He proceeds to go berserk in a giant torture chamber! One of **Roger Corman's** best!
- 45) **SKI PARTY** (1965) **Frankie Avalon, Yvonne "Batgirl" Craig, Dwayne Hickman, James Brown, Lesley Gore**- Another classic beach party movie with **Frankie** and **Dwayne** going in drag! Like wow, Daddy-O!
- 46) **COMEDY OF TERRORS** (1964) **Vincent Price, Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre, Basil Rathbone**- Two undertakers and their bumbling assistant turn to murder to bring in new customers!
- 48) **MARY JANE** (1968) **Fabian, Teri Garr**- Confused punks on dope! "Two Are in Jail and the others Have Blown Their Minds!" Super-rare anti-drug propaganda poster!
- 49) **HAUNTED PALACE** (1963) **Vincent Price** as a warlock who returns from the grave seeking revenge against the villagers who had burned him at the stake! A **Roger Corman** classic also starring **Debra Paget** and **Lon Chaney Jr.**
- 50) **THE ABC'S OF LOVE** (1952) Vintage burlesque film with 4 gorgeous strippers posing on the poster! "Adults Only! See Burlesque's Sexiest Blonde!"
- 51) **CIRCUS OF HORRORS** (1960) One of the big three unforgettable sick British shockers dealing with voyeurism, physical deformities and murders!
- 52) **HOW TO STUFF A WILD BIKINI** (1965) **Annette Funicello, Dwayne Hickman, The Kinsmen, Brian Wilson, Buster Keaton**- The craziest of the beach movies!
- 53) **PANIC IN THE YEAR ZERO** (1962) **Ray Milland, Frankie Avalon**- One of the earliest and best post-nuclear holocaust films! Poster art depicts atomic blast leveling Los Angeles. "When Civilization Came to an End!"
- 54) **QUEEN OF BLOOD** (1966) **Basil Rathbone, Dennis Hopper, Forrest J Ackerman**- Astronauts go to Mars and bring home green alien woman who drains their blood! **BLOOD BATH**- **Roger Corman's** tale of a crazed artist and his wax-covered murder victims who come back to life! (and, boy, are they mad!)
- 56) **BLACK SUNDAY** (1961) **Barbara Steele** is a witch who returns from the grave to seek revenge after being burned at the stake! Beautifully atmospheric.
- 57) **DEVIL'S ANGELS** (1967) Killer bikers head for hideout smashing everything in their way! Lurid and trashy graphics!
- 58) **DIARY OF A BACHELOR** (1964) "He played the game of love like it was Russian Roulette...with pretty girls instead of ammunition!" Great girly poster!
- 59) **FLESH EATERS** (1964) Outrageous shocker with plane crash survivors trapped on an

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A SCREAM IN THE STREETS

by Harry Novak

I produced *Scream In The Streets* back in 1966. It was made at the request of Pacific Drive-In Theatres here in Los Angeles. Their buyer and booker was always looking for film titles with a "hook" to them, and he felt that this title would sell some tickets. And he was certainly right! We did a hell of a business with this film at their theatres. It opened at their drive-in down in Long Beach and they held it over for two weeks, then went for multi-screen playdates all around Southern California.

We also put it out as *Girls In The Street* and *Scream Street*. We played it in Germany, France, Italy, and all throughout Asia, where action films are popular; we did extremely well.

This was shot on location in the San Fernando Valley, and everything you see is real; no in-studio shots. In the car chase you see the car sail over the cliff -- a scene that was unplanned but very real! The driver lost control of the car and it went over the cliff on Mulholland Drive. We would like to have used the car for one more scene, but unfortunately it was totalled.

It was a rather strange film, with a policeman working undercover dressed as a woman. Pete Perry and I helped direct it, and it's probably one of our most popular films. I'm glad to be presenting it through this video offer with *Cul Movies Magazine*, mastered from our original 35mm negative, in mint condition. I hope you enjoy this popular, action packed film! ■



BOXOFFICE BookinGuide :: October 9

A SCREAM IN THE STREETS

R Crime Drama

Boxoffice Int'l 96 Minutes

Just as "The French Connection" and "Dirty Harry" gave new dimensions and depth to Gene Hackman and Clint Eastwood, this Carl Manson produced-and-directed contemporary drama revolving around a Los Angeles police crackdown of a rapist-murderer posing as a woman should prove a career milestone for John Kirkpatrick, as impressive a thespian as has come down the pike in many years. The Erick Norden script casts him as a plainclothesman who works strictly by the book. His new linkup with partner Frank Bannon, a chap who doesn't go along with fixed formula and predictable patterns in law enforcement, leads to successful seeking out of the killer, a vicious Brandy Lyman. In the ensuing showdown, Kirkpatrick is killed and Bannon, fittingly, fatally shoots Lyman. The generation gap, law enforcement-style, has been eliminated. Rosie Stone has some moving moments as a policeman who volunteers to help the two plainclothesmen in their search. Production values (Boxoffice International topper Harry Novak was executive producer) are topnotch; one sequence has a car plummeting over a sheer cliff. With aggressive selling, this should prove sleeper entertainment. Color is by Movielab.

John Kirkpatrick, Frank Bannon, Rosie Stone, Linda York, Brandy Lyman, Con Covert.

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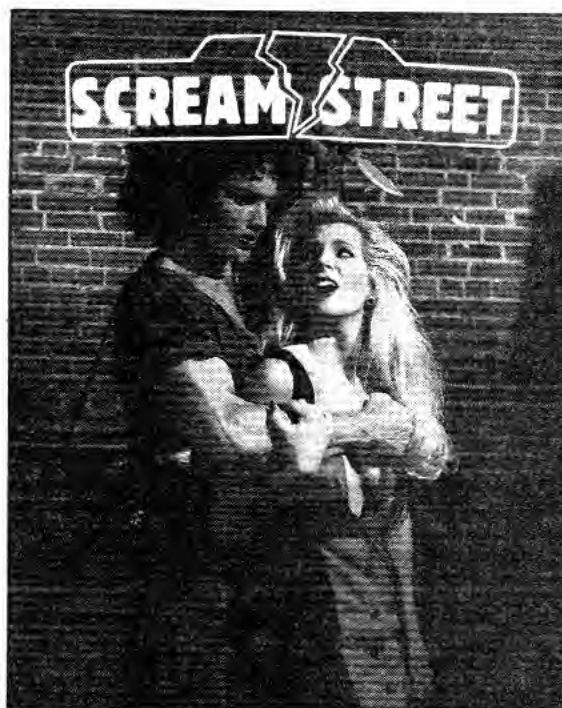
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Jun Fukuda Interview

by David Milner

Translation by Yoshihiko Shibata

Jun Fukuda directed *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster* (1966), *Son Of Godzilla* (1967), *Godzilla vs. Gigan* (1972), *Godzilla vs. Megalon* (1973), *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* (1974) and several other science fiction films. He also directed a number of different crime dramas, comedies and documentaries.

Cult Movies: *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster* originally was going to be called *King Kong vs. Ebirah*. Why was King Kong replaced with Godzilla?

Jun Fukuda: Godzilla was in the first draft of the script that I saw. I don't know what the earlier drafts were like.

CM: What changes were made after you received the script?

JF: All I can remember is that making *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster* was like pouring two cups of water into one. I had to cut one sequence after another.

CM: Do you remember which specific sequences you cut?

JF: I don't remember.

My memories about *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster* are not very clear because I was working on a script for a television drama while we were shooting the film. As soon as we completed it, I went to the NHK studios and confined myself so I could finish the script. (NHK is Japan's public television network.)

Toho sent me a copy of the VHS tape edition of *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster* when it was released. It was like opening up an old wound. I didn't watch the tape. Instead, I gave it to my daughter as a present. (The Toho Company Limited produced all of the *Godzilla* movies. It also produced *Rodan* (1956), *Mothra* (1961), *Chidrah - The Three-Headed Monster* (1964), *King Kong Escapes* (1967) and many other science fiction films.)

CM: Do you remember why Minya was created? (Minya, the *Son Of Godzilla*, appears in *Son Of Godzilla*, *Destroy All Monsters* (1968) and *Godzilla's Revenge* (1969).)

JF: We wanted to take a new approach. So, we gave *Godzilla* a child. We thought that it would be a little strange if *Godzilla* had a daughter, so we instead gave him a son. We focused on the relationship between *Godzilla* and his son throughout *Son Of Godzilla*.

CM: Was Minya created solely to appeal to children?

JF: No - we just wanted to take a different approach.

CM: Were the production budgets for the *Godzilla* movies produced during the 1970s smaller than those for the *Godzilla* movies produced during the 1960s?

JF: The production budgets for the 1970s *Godzilla* films were about half of those for the 1960s *Godzilla* films.

CM: Did you make the decision to include only stock music in *Godzilla vs. Gigan* (1972)? (The music was written by Akira Ifukube, one of Japan's most prominent classical composers. He scored *Godzilla - King Of The Monsters* (1954), *Terror Of MechaGodzilla* (1975), *Godzilla vs. Ghidrah* (1991) and many other monster movies.)

JF: Tomoyuki Tanaka made the decision. He was trying to save money. (Mr. Tanaka produced virtually all of Toho's monster movies.)

CM: How much time did you spend working on *Godzilla vs. Megalon* (1973)?



JF: We spent four months working on the film. The production budget for it was even smaller than the one for *Godzilla vs. Gigan*, so we had a very difficult time making the movie.

CM: How much time did you spend working on the other science fiction films you directed?

JF: About five or six months.

CM: In the trailer for *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*, there is an alternate to the sequence in the movie showing *MechaGodzilla* emerging from its disguise as *Godzilla*. Why was the alternate sequence shot?

JF: The trailer was directed by the chief assistant director (Jozaburo Nishikawa), so I don't know much about it.

CM: Ishiro Honda took part in the planning of *The Secret Of The Telegian* (1960). Was he originally going to direct the film? (Mr. Honda directed many of the monster movies produced by Toho. He also directed a number of war films and documentaries and worked very closely with director Akira Kurosawa on *Kagemusha - The Shadow Warrior* (1980), *Ran* (1985), *Akira Kurosawa's Dreams* (1990), *Rhapsody In August* (1991) and *Maadadayo* (1993).)

JF: It is possible.

CM: Were you officially promoted to director before you began working on *The Secret Of The Telegian*?

JF: It was Toho's policy at the time to require assistant directors to direct three films before they would be promoted. Assistant directors were Toho employees, but once they became directors, they would have to quit. They then would have to sign contracts with Toho that came up for renewal annually.

The Secret Of The Telegian was my second movie. My third one was very successful, so I was promoted. (*Fangs Of The Underworld* (1962) was written in part by Mr. Fukuda.)

CM: Why wasn't the sequel to *The Secret Of The Telegian*, *Transparent Man Against Flame Man*, produced? (Mr. Fukuda took part in writing it as well.)

JF: The script wasn't accepted. The film wasn't as successful as Toho had hoped it would be. That's why the sequel wasn't produced.

CM: In what year was the sequel written?

JF: It was written four or five years after *The Secret Of The Telegian* was released.

CM: Do you remember anything about the plot?

JF: I just remember that the transparent man

was pitted against a flame man.

CM: *E.S.P./SPY* (1974) was written long before it was produced. Why wasn't it produced sooner?

JF: It was just a matter of timing.

CM: In the book *Japanese Science Fiction, Fantasy And Horror Films*, Stuart Galbraith IV suggests that *The War In Space* (1977) is based at least in part on *Atragon* (1963). Is this true? (In both movies, invading forces are countered with a ship commanded by a man who at first refused to fight.)

JF: Yes - it is.

CM: Why was Masaru Sato chosen to score *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster*, *Son Of Godzilla* and *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*? (Mr. Sato also scored a number of Akira Kurosawa's films.)

JF: Mr. Sato and I had been very close friends for a long time. I asked him to compose the music for those movies because I wanted them to have a different feel than Mr. Honda's *Godzilla* films. Mr. Sato's music is a bit lighter than Mr. Ifukube's.

CM: So you made the decision to ask Mr. Sato to score the movies?

JF: Yes - that's right. Mr. Tanaka didn't agree with the decision.

CM: Did he want you to ask Mr. Ifukube to score the films?

JF: Yes.

CM: How would you say your approach to making *Godzilla* films was different from Mr. Honda's?

JF: I generally think of my movies as action dramas.

CM: What was your professional relationship with Eiji Tsuburaya like? (Mr. Tsuburaya directed the special effects for *Godzilla - King Of The Monsters*, *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1962), *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster* and many of Toho's other science fiction films. He also founded Tsuburaya Productions, Inc., which produced *Ultraman* (1966), *Mighty Jack* (1968) and a number of other science fiction television series.)

JF: We were just like father and son. He offered suggestions about my work. He always took very good care of me.

CM: Did Mr. Tsuburaya act solely in an advisory role on *Son Of Godzilla* or was he more actively involved in the production of the movie? (Mr. Tsuburaya is credited as the "special skill supervisor" on the film. Teisho Arikawa is credited as the "special skill director." He previously had worked on many of Toho's monster movies as a special effects cinematographer.)

JF: Mr. Tsuburaya was actively involved in the production of the film.

CM: Was Mr. Tanaka actively involved in the production of the *Godzilla* movies you directed?

JF: He didn't take part in production. However, he did take part in preparing the production budgets.

CM: Did Mr. Tanaka come to visit the set very often?

JF: Yes - quite often.

CM: Would he offer suggestions or just watch?

JF: He would just watch.

CM: What was your professional relationship with Teruyoshi Nakano like? (Mr. Nakano worked as an assistant to Eiji Tsuburaya for many years. Shortly after Mr. Tsuburaya died in 1970, Mr. Nakano was placed in charge of special effects.)

JF: We worked together very closely. After reading the scripts, I would ask Mr. Nakano to draw

the storyboards. I would check them, and sometimes I would ask Mr. Nakano to make revisions. Once we both found the storyboards acceptable, we would begin filming.

CM: The two of you worked together during planning, but once shooting got underway, you worked separately. Is this correct?

JF: Yes – that's correct. However, we did ask each other for advice whenever we ran into problems.

CM: Did you or Mr. Nakano choose which special effects footage would be used?

JF: The final decisions were mine. If I didn't like the editing that Mr. Nakano had done, I would ask him to make revisions. I once even asked him to reshoot a sequence.

CM: I've heard that very little improvisation was allowed during filming. Is this true?

JF: It was very difficult to do improvisation because of the tight shooting schedule and the nature of the movies.

CM: Can you remember any improvised lines that made it into one of the Godzilla films you directed?

JF: I can't remember any such lines.

CM: You directed a number of episodes of the *Zone Fighter* (1973) television series. (The series is very much like *Ultraman*. Godzilla, Ghidrah and the cyborg Gigan all make guest appearances in it.)

JF: You don't have to mention that show!

CM: Just one question! How was this different from working on the monster movies your directed?

JF: The shooting schedule was very tight.

People watch television on a small screen in a well-lit room instead of a large one in a dark

theater. Because of this, I think television is not the right medium for giant monster movies.

CM: Which of the science fiction films you directed are your favorites?

JF: None of them.

CM: If you had to pick one?

JF: *The Secret Of Telegian*.

CM: Which of the Godzilla films you directed are your favorites?

JF: None of them.

CM: Are there any with which you are especially unhappy?

JF: Many.

CM: Do you feel that Toho should not have produced any sequels to *Godzilla – King Of The Monsters*?

JF: I don't think that any sequels to the first Godzilla movie should have been made.

CM: With which of the actors did you most enjoy working?

JF: I enjoyed working with the entire cast of *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster*. However, both Akihiko Hirata and Kumi Mizuno stood out. They were very impressive. (Ms. Mizuno, who also appears in *Godzilla vs. Monster Zero* (1965), *War Of The Gargantuas* (1966) and several other science fiction films, plays Dayo, a native girl. Mr. Hirata, who also appears in *Godzilla – King Of The Monsters*, *Terror Of MechaGodzilla* and many other monster movies, plays squad leader in the Red Bamboo, the paramilitary organization producing nuclear weapons.)

CM: How did you like working with Robert Dunham? (Mr. Dunham plays Antonio, the leader of an underground civilization called Seatopia, in *Godzilla vs. Megalon*. He also appears in *Mothra* and *Dagora – The Space Monster* (1964).)

JF: He was not a professional actor. He was just an American living in Tokyo.

CM: You directed a number of comedies. Did you enjoy working on them more than you enjoyed working on monster movies? (Among the comedies Mr. Fukuda directed are *Young Guy In Japan* (1962) and *Young Guy In Hawaii* (1963).)

JF: Yes!

CM: Have you worked only as a film director?

JF: I've worked only as an assistant director and a director.

CM: I've heard that you recently finished working on a documentary. Is this correct?

JF: I recently finished working on two different documentaries. One tells the tragic story of a warlord living in a small country during the medieval era. The other is a documentary about the Sahara desert that was commissioned by a Moroccan television station. No people are shown in it. Instead, only images of the desert are shown.

CM: Have you seen the newer Godzilla movies? (Among them are *Godzilla vs. Biollante* (1989), *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1992) and *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla* (1994).)

JF: No.

CM: How do you feel about TriStar Pictures producing a Godzilla film in the United States?

JF: I'm looking forward to seeing it. It is easy for me to imagine what Mr. Nakano would do with the movie, but I can't imagine what Americans would do with it. I think that Godzilla films must be produced by Americans.

CM: Is that because Godzilla films cost so much to make?

JF: Yes – that's right. (Production budgets for movies made in the United States generally are ten times those for Japanese movies.)■

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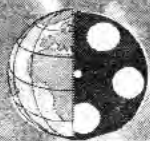
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Takao Okawara Interview – Take II

by David Milner
Translation by
Yoshihiko Shibata

The first film Takao Okawara directed, the psychological thriller *Super Girl Reiko* (1991), was not very successful. However, his next movie, *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1992), brought in more people than any Godzilla film produced since *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster* (1966) had. *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* (1993) and *Yamato Takeru* (1994), Mr. Okawara's most recent movies, were not as successful as *Godzilla vs. Mothra*, but they did well.

Cult Movies: *Yamato Takeru* is very different from the two Godzilla films you directed.

Takao Okawara: Godzilla films are dominated by special effects. *Yamato Takeru* is a drama.

CM: The movie also is a period piece. Did it present more of a challenge to the actors than your Godzilla films because of this?

TO: That is probably true. However, I allowed Yasuko Sawaguchi and Masahiro Takashima to act the way they normally do in the movie. I treated it not as a period piece, but instead as a futuristic drama imagined by people living in the past. (Mr. Takashima, who also appears in *Gunhed* (1989), *Zipang* (1990) and *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*, plays Yamato Takeru, the heir to the Yamato throne. Ms. Sawaguchi, who also appears in *Godzilla 1985* (1984), plays Oto Tachibana, Yamato Takeru's consort.)

CM: Did you select Ms. Sawaguchi and Mr. Takashima for their roles?

TO: They were both cast before I was chosen to direct *Yamato Takeru*.

CM: I've heard that the battle between Yamato Takeru and the Kumasogami (Kumaso god) was shot not by the special effects staff, but instead by you and your staff. Is this true? (The Kumasogami lived in Kyushu.)

TO: The battle was shot entirely by me and my staff. The Kumasogami originally was going to be a giant spider, but I felt that it instead should be a creature made of stone.

CM: Did you come up with the idea to have the hands of the Kumasogami turn into a bow and arrows?

TO: That was my idea.

CM: How much time was Kioko Ogino given to score *Yamato Takeru*?

TO: She started writing the music on May 20th. It was recorded on June 5th. (*Yamato Takeru* opened in Japan on July 9th.)

CM: Did you allow her to see the rushes?

TO: Since she was given so little time in which to do her work, I did allow her to see the rushes.

CM: How did you become aware of Ms. Ogino?

TO: I was introduced to her by a producer who works for Toho Music Publishing. (The Toho Company Limited produced *Yamato Takeru*. It also produced all of the Godzilla films.)

CM: Did you ask Akira Ifukube to compose the score? (Mr. Ifukube, one of Japan's most prominent classical composers, wrote the music for about half of the Godzilla films. He also worked on *Rodan* (1956), *War Of The Gargantuas* (1966) and many of Toho's other giant monster movies.)

TO: I did consider asking him to score *Yamato Takeru*, but since it was going to be so different from the Godzilla films, I decided to ask a different composer.

CM: I've heard that Yamato Takeru originally was going to be made much sooner than it was. Is this true?

TO: The movie was going to be made right after *Godzilla vs. Mothra*. It was going to mark the anniversary of Toho Geino, an organization made up of actors and actresses who work for Toho.

CM: Was the first version of the script for *Yamato Takeru* very different from the final one? (The script was written by Wataru Mimura. He also wrote *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*.)

TO: A large number of changes were made. *Yamato Takeru* originally was going to be a remake of *Japan Birth* (1959). (Both films are based on *Kojiki*, the mythological story of the creation of Japan.) However, since the movie was going to be the first of three films based on *Kojiki*, I felt that it would be better to focus more on the relationship between Yamato Takeru and Oto Tachibana. So, I



omitted several of the events in the myth and inserted a number of new ones. For example, I decided to have Yamato Takeru retrieve the magatama (comma-shaped jewel), the circular mirror and the sword. (They are the three symbols of the Japanese imperial family.) I also decided to provide him with two companions skilled in the martial arts. (Seiryu, the older of the two, is played by Miyashi Ishibashi. Genbu is played by Bengal.)

CM: Is Toho going to try to export *Yamato Takeru*?

TO: A Taiwanese motion picture distribution company has already purchased rights to it.

CM: Which scenes in *Godzilla 1985* did you direct? (Mr. Okawara worked on the movie as an assistant director.)

TO: I just helped the other directors.

CM: Did you and Ms. Sawaguchi work together while you were shooting the film? (Ms. Sawaguchi plays Naoko Okumura, a woman who takes part in conducting research which leads to the discovery that Godzilla can be lured with a sound simulating the chirping of birds.)

TO: No – not at all.

CM: I've heard that Kenji Sahara originally was

going to be in *Godzilla vs. Mothra*. Is this true? (Mr. Sahara appears in *Rodan*, *Destroy All Monsters* (1968), *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* and a number of Toho's other monster movies.)

TO: It's certainly possible. Toho always tries to arrange for actors who worked on the earlier Godzilla films to appear in the newer ones.

CM: Were any of the other actors who worked on Toho's earlier monster movies originally going to be in *Godzilla vs. Mothra* or *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*?

TO: Frankie Sakai was going to be in *Godzilla vs. Mothra*. (Mr. Sakai plays a reporter named "Bulldog" Tsinchan in *Mothra* (1961).)

CM: Why didn't he work on the film?

TO: He had a scheduling conflict.

CM: Was it your idea to introduce the baby Godzilla in *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*?

TO: Toho wanted to bring Minya back, but I didn't. So, I redesigned him. (Minya, the son of Godzilla, appears in *Son Of Godzilla* (1967), *Destroy All Monsters* and *Godzilla's Revenge* (1969).)

CM: *Godzilla vs. Mothra* is a lighthearted film, but *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* is a very serious one. Did you intend to have the two movies turn out to be so different from each other?

TO: *Mothra* is a very feminine monster, but *MechaGodzilla* is hard and solid. Because of this, I did intend to have *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* turn out to be more serious than *Godzilla vs. Mothra*. However, I used the baby Godzilla to provide some relief.

CM: Are there any improvised lines in your Godzilla films?

TO: We didn't do any improvisation while we were working on them. However, all of the bum's lines in *Godzilla 1985* were improvised. (The bum is played by Tetsuya Takeda.)

CM: There are a large number of outtakes from *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*. What scenes are included in them?

TO: The simulated battle between the members of G-Force and Godzilla originally was going to appear to be a real one. We were going to reveal that it was simulated only at its conclusion. (G-Force is run by the United Nations Godzilla Countermeasures Center.)

Jun Sonezaki was going to fall in love with Catherine Burger. (*MechaGodzilla* co-pilot Catherine Burger is played by Sherry Sweeney. *MechaGodzilla* weapons officer Jun Sonezaki is played by Ichirota Miyagawa.)

Many shorter scenes also were not used.

CM: Are there many outtakes from *Godzilla vs. Mothra*?

TO: Fewer than there are from *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*.

There was going to be a quarrel about Mr. Ando exploring Infant Island in a suit. It was going to provide comic relief. (Kenji Ando, an executive employed by the Marutomo Corporation, is played by Takehiro Murata.)

CM: Was there much special effects footage shot for but not included in *Yamato Takeru*?

TO: *Yamato Takeru* originally was going to jump onto one of the heads of the Yamata no orochi (eight-headed snake of Yamata) not just once, but twice. In addition, the sequence in which the utsu no ikusa gami (battle god of outer space) and the Yamata no orochi do battle originally was going to be much longer. (The utsu no ikusa gami is a huge metallic samurai into which Yamato Takeru and Oto Tachibana transmute.)

CM: Why was it edited?

TO: We showed a rush edit of *Yamato Takeru* to a number of Toho executives, and they felt that the sequence should be shorter. (The running time of the rush edit was one hour and fifty minutes.) So, Koichi Kawakita reworked it. I felt that his editing made the sequence a little too short, so I asked him to put several shots back into it. (Mr. Kawakita directed the special effects for *Yamato Takeru*. He also directed the special effects for the last five *Godzilla* films.)

CM: During our previous conversation, you mentioned that you got the idea to have Takuya Fujita flail his arms while you were watching *The Silence Of The Lambs* (1991). Were any of the shots in *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* or *Yamato Takeru* inspired by shots in American movies? (Takuya Fujita, who is played by Tetsuya Bessho, flails his arms in *Godzilla vs. Mothra* after he learns that he is going to be stuck in jail for fourteen years.)

TO: I can't think of any.

CM: Did Tomoyuki Tanaka come to visit the set while the films you directed were being shot? (Mr. Tanaka produced virtually all of Toho's monster movies.)

TO: Yes.

CM: Very often?

TO: Only a few times.

CM: What is your professional relationship with Shogo Tomiyama like? (Mr. Tomiyama produced *Yamato Takeru*. He and Mr. Tanaka co-produced the last five *Godzilla* films.)

TO: Even though *Super Girl Reiko* was not very successful, I was chosen to direct *Godzilla vs. Mothra*. I think Mr. Tomiyama helped me get the job. When Toho was trying to decide upon a director for *Yamato Takeru*, I think he again helped me.

CM: Does Mr. Tomiyama come to visit the set

very often?

TO: Yes.

CM: Does he offer suggestions or just watch?

TO: He offers suggestions.

CM: What is your professional relationship with Mr. Kawakita like?

TO: We each have our own ideas. If they fit together, things go very smoothly. However, if they don't, we end up competing with each other.

CM: Do you and Mr. Kawakita work together at all while you are filming?

TO: We work together while we are planning movies, but we work separately while we are shooting them.

CM: Do you choose the special effects footage that will be used?

TO: I have the right to make the final decisions. However, I usually only offer suggestions when I see the special effects footage.

CM: Does Mr. Kawakita offer suggestions about the standard footage?

TO: Sometimes.

CM: Have you worked only as a film director?

TO: Toho employees must work for the company for six months before they officially will be hired. During my first six months with Toho, I worked at a number of different jobs. However, when I officially was hired, I was made an assistant director.

CM: Do you take part in writing the scripts for your movies?

TO: Wataru Mimura, Mr. Tomiyama and I take part in writing the scripts. After several different outlines have been written, we call in Mr. Kawakita.

CM: Many directors find it difficult to draw storyboards. Do you?

TO: Drawing storyboards is a painstaking job,

but it's one that must be done.

The sequence in which *Yamato Takeru* does battle with the Kumaso gami is made up of eighty different shots. Immediately after the script for *Yamato Takeru* was completed, I was asked to draw the storyboards for the sequence because without them, no one could have prepared to shoot it.

CM: During our previous conversation, you mentioned that you have a few story ideas. Are you willing to reveal any of them?

TO: I have two. One is a human drama about a zookeeper. The other is an occult comedy.

CM: Do you think either one will be made into a film anytime soon?

TO: I have sent them to Toho's planning office, but they haven't been picked up yet.

CM: Are you going to release a director's cut of *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* on home video?

TO: I see filmmaking as the art of editing. Because of this, I am reluctant to release one on home video. (A director's cut was not released.)

CM: Are you going to direct the two sequels to *Yamato Takeru*?

TO: I unofficially have been selected to direct the first sequel.

CM: Will it be your next movie?

TO: Yes.

CM: When will it be released?

TO: That depends on when the American *Godzilla* film is released. (TriStar Pictures' *Godzilla* movie is scheduled to open during the summer of 1996.)

CM: Will Toho produce a *Godzilla* film in 1995?

TO: That also depends on when the American *Godzilla* movie is released. (Toho is going to release a new *Godzilla* film in Japan in December, 1995.)■

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ED WOOD OR ED WOOD

"Real Life or Hollywood Movie? You Decide!"

Special Article by Katherine Orrison

"I'm taking you to meet the strangest, funniest man you'll ever know," my then-husband Peter Coe promised. "In fact, you can dine out for years in this town on the strength of his acquaintance." I must have looked both shocked and perplexed because he hastily added: "Just kidding, for Chrissake; if there's anyone that doesn't apply to, that's Ed Wood!"

Oh, irony of ironies — if Peter only knew how wrong he was! I've enjoyed many a lunch at Musso's lately courtesy of Mr. Wood. I say "lately" advisedly, as I didn't speak of that life and those times for almost 25 years. Most especially until ex-husband Peter had joined Ed Wood and Bela Lugosi in the Big Screening Room in the Sky. Nowadays, only a small handful of "Woodrians" survive to tell the tale — a cautionary tale with the age-old caveat to not believe everything you hear. Why is my tale different? Because almost invariably I was the sole clean-and-sober witness as Ed Wood went through his version of prolonged mid-life crisis.

"I only am escaped alone to tell thee" because I was always twenty to thirty years younger than anyone else in the room. I was still a teenager when Peter introduced me in 1967 to a man I took to be in his late 50's, but who in actuality was but 43. The occasion was a birthday party Ed was throwing for a songwriter friend named Steven. Paul Marco, Peter's obsessive fan and hanger-on since the 1940's, had insisted for weeks that we attend. ("Now that you've bought a house in North Hollywood, you're so close — you should become re-acquainted. Ed is always talking about how only you should play Lugosi.")

Peter took little seriously, but always enjoyed being the center of attention — a guarantee with Ed's crowd. He also enjoyed shocking me with either outrageous behavior, outrageous people or both. He was fairly certain Ed wouldn't disappoint.

"Oh, Peter," Ed enthused, "Your new bride is adorable! *Bride Of Dracula*, how appropriate!"

"No, Peter was in *House Of Frankenstein*," I corrected.

"I want Peter to play dear ol' Bela in my picture," Ed explained.

"In Hungarian — the one language I can't speak," Peter joked.

Though it was barely after 5:00 in the afternoon, most everyone at "Steven the Star's" birthday party was drunk. Since I did not drink or smoke, Ed served me a ginger ale and conducted us on a tour of his rented Valley tract-house. What I remember most vividly is Ed's work room. Brushing aside the boxes of adult-sex books he was writing at the time, Ed proudly showed me his miniature King Kong display. In every detail he had painstakingly built his own King Kong, complete with jungle set, log gates and tiny terrified natives, fleeing the great Kong's wrath.

"This is months of work, Ed. Why do you do it?" Peter asked.

"It soothes me. I can really get lost in a world of my own making. I'm especially proud of Kong here; I made him from my old mink stole."

Ed's reputation having preceded him, I wasn't shocked — not even when Peter gleefully pointed out a picture of Ed arrayed in women's attire, including King Kong's hide, complete with an incongruous Errol Flynn mustache.

"See, I told you he was crazy," Peter whispered. No, not crazy, I thought, but certainly eccentric.

Ed's wife Kathy (I've found throughout my life there are always three to six Kathys in any given room) appeared to have decided her life was over at 40, and I don't ever recall seeing her sober at any time. She cried a lot about lost youth and was

time in every way. I always envisioned him standing on the back of a wagon emblazoned "Professor Criswell" in the 1880's; selling his personal brand of snake-oil. And having people actually cured by the power of his words was his true calling. He seemed to know he was born to help little old ladies across the street, kiss babies, dance with all the wallflowers — charm was second nature to him. All women were created equal — the fair and the plain. Every one of them worthy of a dazzling smile, a courteous bow, a sympathetic ear. Which brings me to Mrs. Criswell. His opposite in most every way.

Whereas Cris always seemed to know what was afoot, remaining untouched by most everything, Mrs. Criswell was quiet, withdrawn — she appeared to be painfully shy. Where Cris was tall, trim, 19th-century handsome (casting actor Jeffrey Jones as Cris in *Ed Wood* was right on the money), Mrs. Criswell was short, stout, and — there is no other word for it — plain. When Cris spoke it was florid, with underlining and exclamation points built in. Mrs. Cris almost never spoke, preferring to sit quietly in Cris's shadow. Speculation abounded in Ed's gossip little group regarding her mental capacity and why Cris had ever married her in the first place.

Then she wrote a play. That's right, a play. Everyone was taken aback when they received invitations to the opening night. It was decided to be magnanimous and attend as a show of support for Cris. (After all, no one really knew HER, did they?) Peter and I went with Peter's old friend from the New York Theatre days, actor Charles Gordon.

"Does anyone know what this is about?" Chuck asked before the curtain.

"Haven't the faintest," Peter replied. And when the curtain came down, people STILL didn't know what it was about.

"Too deep for me," Chuck observed.

"A combination of Jean-Paul Sartre and John Osborne, I think," Peter replied.

What we were treated to that evening at the Gardner Street Playhouse was a fascinating journey through Mrs. Criswell's head. Two little thirteen-year-old actresses walked out, took center stage, poured tea, and discussed life, death, metaphysics and existentialism for two solid hours, leaving the audience in the dust! Fourteen years later I saw much the same thing in a movie called *My Dinner With Andre* — a bit award-winner as you may remember. And I thought of Mrs. Criswell — most especially about when to keep my mouth shut. Of course, her cover was blown after that. And I wasn't the least bit surprised to find her writing Cris's annual New Year's Eve predictions for "The Tonight Show" that year.

Just how or when Peter met Ed Wood is not known to me, but I'm pretty sure Paul Marco was the one responsible, as he had known Peter since the late '40's. As proof, he often related the famous trip-across-America-in-the-Lincoln-Zephyr story to anyone who'd listen whenever he had too much



devastated by middle-age, going on and on once about my being nineteen with nary a wrinkle. I thought her fairly harmless until that Halloween (Ed loved Halloween and was always a gregarious host, doing all the bar-tending himself), when she attacked a party guest she suspected of having designs on Ed. She couldn't do much harm, flailing away at the woman with her arms and doubled-up fists. Rather, for me, it was the act of aggression in and of itself that led me to demand Peter take me home. For once he didn't argue.

Now that I'm older and think back on it, however, I'm much more understanding of Kathy's righteous indignation. And there have been times since, when I wish I lacked the inhibitions that prevented me from socking supposed friends on the jaw for an act of betrayal.

During the three subsequent years that I was exposed to the Woods and their fluctuating inner circle, I came to know (in Paul Marco's case, too well) most everyone still around from the *Plan 9 / Bride Of The Monster* 1950's. Mr. and Mrs. Criswell topped the list. Predictor Criswell was identical on screen and off. I never saw him — even at afternoon picnics at his own place on Selma, without every hair in place, resplendent in a perfectly tailored suit. He never appeared to sweat or get dirty like other people. He was a man out of his

to drink; Peter, his second wife Dorothea and their daughter Danna, together with family Airedale Muffin, Paul Marco, and everybody's luggage drove from Los Angeles to New York City for Peter's appearance in a play called *The Greatest Of These*. The Lincoln Zephyr was a big, beautiful car on the outside, but extremely cramped on the inside. It was late summer, no air conditioning, and how everyone kept from killing each other I don't know. Ed Wood was arriving in Hollywood at about the same time, and none of them would ever have met had *The Greatest Of These* been a success. As it was, the play flopped, Peter and his wife divorced, and he returned to Hollywood and movie roles ranging from *The Sands Of Iwo Jima* and *The Egyptian*, to *Rocky Mountain*, *The Ten Commandments*, and *The Road To Bali*.

Paul Marco, on the other hand, got a nose job, declaring it made him look more like "a young Tyrone Power," and met Ed Wood (probably in the property department at Universal Studios) and did his "acting" in *Bride Of The Monster*, *Plan 9* and *Night Of The Ghouls*. When I met Marco in 1966, he was still talking about his "cameo" with Bela Lugosi in 1954 and how he provided the "only comic relief" in *Bride Of The Monster*, "with special billing: And Paul Marco as Kelton." He was not my favorite person. I've found since that I'm not alone in that assessment. Paul Marco's insistence on being center-stage no matter the occasion, location, or company had a knack of making enemies and infuriating people. Ed seemed not to notice, though I'm sure he did; he was not an unintelligent man. Somehow, he tolerated Paul and Paul never got out of hand. The same is not true for yours truly. There was, for instance, the night Paul destroyed Thanksgiving dinner in my new house, getting into a food fight with his in-laws. (Peter and I liked Paul's sister and brother-in-law George very much, which is why Paul was over for dinner in the first place), and there was the night when, finding myself trapped in my own kitchen with Paul, I almost killed him with a boiling pot of clam spaghetti sauce. But that's another story.

Probably the nicest afternoon I ever spent with Ed and the "wild bunch" was an Easter barbecue in 1968. We all gathered in Criswell's friend Walter's big front yard on Laurel Canyon Boulevard. I forget Walter's last name, but I remember he spoke with a German accent, took good care of his aged mother and gave me a calico kitten from his cat's litter that I kept for over ten years. A lot of group photos were taken that afternoon, with Ed "directing" every one of them. We all lunched at big picnic tables, with Mrs. Criswell insisting I sit next to an elderly lady named Olga. Mrs. Criswell and I had barely spoken more than a handful of sentences to each other, but she had me pegged right. That Olga was one of the great encounters of my life.

"Olga is a lion tamer!" Mrs. Criswell enthused as she brought us together.

"Oh, yeah," I thought, "this little old lady is a lion tamer and I'm really long-lost Anastasio." But I decided to be polite and make nice-nice conversation.

"Where do you tame lions?" I asked.

"At Jungle-Land," Olga replied with a charming Russian accent and a knowing smile. (Jungle-Land, long since paved over for yet another shopping mall, was a tourist attraction in the Valley in those days.)

"Did you ever see a movie called *Bringing Up Baby*?" she asked. Even though that was a ludicrous question to ask most 19-year-olds in 1968, such was not the case with me. "My cat," she said proudly.

"Leopards, too?"



The amazing Criswell.

"Oh, yes, lions, leopards, cheetahs, and tigers — my husband and I handled them all. Do you remember a man named Mr. Cecil DeMille?"

Yes, I'd heard of him; my husband had worked for him on several movies.

"All my cats. Every film where he used cats: my cats. From the silent days till the day he died."

"Tell me about him, Olga," I urged. And did she ever. For hours — till the sun went down. I found out all about Cecil B. DeMille, Raoul Walsh, the Russian Revolution and Hollywood's infancy. Imagine my surprise, years later, when I saw documentary footage of Olga Celeste working with Howard Hawks, Katherine Hepburn, and her cat in *Bringing Up Baby*.

It was barely months later that Mrs. Criswell called to tell me Jungle-Land had been closed down and, after having to put her cats to sleep, Olga had died. I can't remember now, but I hope I thanked her for arranging our meeting.

An aspect of Ed Wood's character that didn't come out in *Ed Wood* was how much he liked children. It seems incongruous, I know, but Peter never worried about bringing his sons over to visit Ed (it was always fun for them, especially around Halloween) because Ed would make an effort to be on his best behavior (drinking-wise) and throw out any "friend" who wasn't. He always had a project or was building something. After his *King Kong* was finished, he began a miniature *Bride Of Frankenstein* set. It was even more wonderful than



Peter Coe and Ann Gwynne from *House Of Frankenstein*.

the *Kong* setup.

"I haunt the toy store on Hollywood Boulevard," he informed us. "I roam the aisles for hours looking at the model kits, the masks, the trick-or-treat costumes." That's why the pie-plate models in *Ed Wood* didn't work for me; I realize the point — and a good one at that — about Ed making do with what he had; and what he didn't have was money. But he was an inventive model builder, finding it therapeutic as well as fun.

Peter's youngest son didn't hesitate when taken to the model room: "Can I have it? Huh? Please? Can I? Please?"

"Why, I made it especially for you," Ed said, without missing a beat. "I'm so pleased you like it." And Peter, Jr. went home with them both: the laboratory set, complete with little Elsa Lanchester and mink-coated King Kong, roaring his dominance over Tarzan's plastic natives. As those things do, I think they lasted for about a week before becoming scattered and broken. I remember sweeping up flattened straw huts, hunks of fur and bits of moss one weekend and finding Elsa's little head still strapped to Dr. Frankenstein's operating table in a shoe box when I moved out of the North Hollywood house.

"Ken Maynard's here," Ed announced when we came over for "Western Night." "I'm sure Kathe would like to meet him."

No doubt about it, I was getting a reputation in Ed's circle — they all had me figured out. Unfortunately, meeting Ken Maynard wasn't the thrill that meeting Olga Celeste was. It appeared that Ed had "taken Ken in," much the way he had once taken Bela into the fold. Ed liked knowing his boyhood heroes and being able to help them out besides. Did Ken need a place to stay? Groceries bought? Medicine picked up? No. Ol' Ken wanted a drink and after that he wanted to feel sorry for himself.

Ken was a big man. I recall craning my neck when Buddy Hyde introduced us. Buddy was protective and sympathetic of Mr. Maynard. "He just can't take it, you know? Life's been hard for him, his wife's just died..."

"You don't remember me, do you, kid?" Ken asked.

"Of course I do." (I did.) Television on Saturday mornings in the early 1950's didn't run cartoons for the kids, they ran old western serials.

"I'm sorry to hear about your wife."

"Oh, God — she's dead! You hadda bring it up! I don't want to live. I tell you, Buddy, I just don't want to live."

"I'm sorry," Buddy apologized to me. "I'd better take him home."

"He is home," Ed said. "Put him to bed in my room."

It was on Western Night that Peter and I took pro-wrestler Tiger Joe Marsh to Eddie's to meet Tor Johnson. That was a match made in heaven. Tiger Joe was Yugoslavian, like Peter, and looked like Khrushchev. Peter and Tiger Joe met doing a "Mission: Impossible," and they had one more day of filming to go to complete this week's episode. "So we can't stay late," Peter cautioned, making sure he had an out.

"I love that show," Ed enthused. "I never miss it! This is your second 'Mission: Impossible' this year, Pete."

"They need those cold-war accents," Peter said.

"Martin Landau is such a great actor — he can do anything, but I love him playing old men best!" Ed said. Peter never liked having other actors praised over him.

"A lot of it is just make-up, you know. He plays me in this one, and he thinks he's got my voice right, but he's wrong." (That was okay — so the

(continued)

voice would match, Mr. Landau simply looped ALL of Peter's lines for that episode.)

"Can I visit the set? I'd love to meet Martin Landau and Barbara Bain."

"It's our last day," Tiger Joe reminded everyone, "Not a good day to get visitors on."

Ed turned to me. "Have you visited the set yet? Did you meet Martin Landau?" I'd visited the set when Peter told me Kent Smith was guest-starring. But I was shy in those days (Mrs. Criswell had nothing on me) and I longed to ask him about *The Fountainhead* and working with Gary Cooper. But, alas, I let the opportunity pass.

"Yes, but I upset Mr. Landau when I complimented him on my favorite 'Outer Limits' episode but not *Cleopatra*."

"Oh, sweetheart, what did he say?"

"He said, 'I was the third male lead in that picture. I worked for two years on it and you don't remember me?'" It was one of the few times I heard the famous Ed Wood giggle.

"You must always watch out for the actor's ego, dear; that sounds just like something old Bela would say!"

That Ed truly loved Bela I have no doubt. I know the preferred viewpoint is "Ed the Exploiter," but, having really known the man and Ed having really known Bela Lugosi, I feel the film *Ed Wood* is closer to the truth of the matter than people might at first think. Pictures of Ed and Bela abounded throughout the house. Theirs was a true relationship, over a period of several years, where Bela Lugosi — who had been completely forgotten by the movie business and passed by — was still sought after and could still enjoy being a big star in Ed's eyes. Although I'm sure Ed was not a pivotal person in Lugosi's life, Lugosi certainly was one in Ed's.

Did Peter ever intend to play Lugosi in Ed's film? I can answer unequivocally: Not on your life! Peter was a tease. And remember, Peter had been a contract player at Universal and really worked with the big guys that Ed admired. Chaney and Carradine, Hope and Crosby, Wayne, Power and

Flynn. His business rep, Bill Michaeljohn, had been Cecil B. DeMille's personal casting agent. He did not need Ed or take him seriously. Like I said, he liked being the shark in Ed's kiddie pool. Did Ed realize it? I don't know.

I departed from Peter and that life of misadventure and turmoil in the summer of '69. When Ed died at Peter's apartment at 5635 Laurel Canyon Blvd. (just blocks from our former home at 5239 Ben Ave.) in December of 1978, I was long gone, having had no contact with Peter since 1971.

Did I ever think anyone would make a movie of all this?!!

The irony of Martin Landau, who played Peter Coe in that episode of "Mission: Impossible" playing Bela Lugosi, who Peter Coe was to play for Ed Wood, who wanted to meet Martin Landau...it's just too much like an Ed Wood film, much less a film about Ed Wood!

I knew Ed Wood. Ed Wood was a friend of mine. Johnny Depp is not the Ed Wood I knew. But I'm prepared to give it the benefit of the doubt, as I didn't know Ed in 1953 when he was 29. But if we could cast anyone, living or dead, the perfect casting is William Holden: same cleft in the chin, same dimples, same light eyes, same hairline even. And, just like Ed, Mr. Holden's drinking changed his looks in a similar fashion.

But Holden and Ed are gone and Johnny Depp it is. You know Jeffrey Jones is wonderful, as is Bill Murray. But there is nothing in this world like Martin Landau's Lugosi... raging at the dying of the light; clinging to his dignity; wholeheartedly committed to the actor's life; under the influence of mind-altering drugs, and capable of saying and doing things that he would never dream of saying or doing otherwise. And unbelievably touching and warm and incredibly loving. As loving as Ed was of Bela. Bela is as loving of Ed. I was moved by Martin Landau's bravery and humanness when it could have been so easy to have done a comedy turn (and looked great doing it). I'm sure it's a lock at the Academy Awards come this spring.

And I speak from deep experience, as for two long, difficult years I took care of a dying man of Lugosi's status: actor/producer Henry Wilcoxon — a man of the old school — a once-big star, shut away in a Burbank tract house that resembled Bela's in the movie to an alarming degree, dying of cancer, forgotten by so many, watching his old films on television. Oh, yes, I've been there. I lived an *Ed Wood* and *Sunset Boulevard* life to a certain degree, never realizing I was in the William Holden part till after Henry's death. "Oh, you really were writing his book?" (That's right, I was there for love, not money.)

Over the years I gave little thought to that time and those people — preferring to forget, move on. And when I encountered old friends of Peter's or Ed's I never identified myself, preferring to assume a Mrs. Criswell-like persona.

I was first re-introduced to Martin Landau at Naomi Caryl's art opening in 1978. He didn't remember me, and I didn't remind him of not remembering him in *Cleopatra*.

I wrangled wardrobe on a movie for Aldo Ray. He started telling me about Ed Wood one day. I listened politely. I liked Aldo. I'd liked him in the old days, and now, sober and earnest, I liked him even better. I said nary a word.

Ed's friend, and owner of the actual King Kong, Bob Burns, attended several of my birthday parties in the 1970's. I've often wondered if he and Ed worked on Ed's King Kong together. I've wondered because I never asked.

I was second-unit art director on a film called *Miracle Mile* that co-starred John Agar. An old friend of Ed's and Peter's, a fellow actor in *Sands of Iwo Jima*. I remembered meeting him at Ed's. It never passed my lips. Instead, John and I played a kind of movie-trivial pursuit between takes. I always knew the obscure answers, the unusual facts. How did I know all this stuff at my age? John asked.

"Just the result of a misspent youth," I replied. ■

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Casual Company Part 4

by Edward D. Wood, Jr.

The First Sergeant paced the office with his hands behind his back. He looked at the empty desks around him, shot his eyes momentarily Heavenward, then began talking to himself, the walls, the air, and the stationary objects of the office.

"Those guys have been gone all of twenty minutes. I'll really read them off when they get back, if they get back. The more breaks I give them, the less they pay back."

Elbo had heard the booming voice through the thick entrance door, so he sheepishly opened the door, permitted Jerry to go through first, then he came in quickly, shut the door and took his place behind his desk.

"Is this a half hour?" shouted the First Sergeant, turning on them.

"Less than twenty minutes," replied Elbo.

Top threw his hands in the air. "You can't even tell time. It's more like forty-five minutes. Now I'm telling you guys for the last....."

The door opened to admit Captain Robert Roberts, with several of his camouflage branches still sticking out of his belt, in the rear. The First Sergeant did not finish his sentence. He went to his desk as the Captain gaily said. "Good afternoon."

The men came to attention and again in unison said. "Good afternoon, Captain."

The Captain took his place at his desk and opened the newspaper that he had left there when he had gone hunting. As Captain Roberts settled back in his chair to read he felt the branches in his belt as they stuck him. He reached around and pulled them out,

looked at the branches then at the men who were not looking at him. He reached around and pulled them out, looked at him. As long as the men had not seen the branches there was nothing to explain. He let them fall to his waste paper basket. A moment later the Captain looked to the First Sergeant, switched his cigar to the other side of his mouth and drawled. "Weren't you saying something when I came in First Sergeant? Go ahead, don't let me interrupt you."

Hashmark looked at the Captain a moment, wishing he could really say what he had planned to say, but instead changed his facial expressions to match his new string of words. He said. "It's like I was saying fellas. I think we are all doing the job at hand to the best of our ability, and I am very glad and happy to see that you are all co-operating so nicely with me. I guess that's all. Continue with your work."

The Captain gave Hashmark a dubious look, then settled back to his newspaper.

The man that opened the door and came through the opening at that moment looked like something the cat had dragged in then realizing it's condition would have nothing to do with it. The man's hair stuck down over his eyes in kinky masses. Along with his two day growth of beard, his necktie, (field scarf), was tied around his neck and extended to a loop on his trousers and there tied to hold the trousers up. The trousers, if one desired to call them that, had long since seen their best days. Long torn pieces hung from the base, and holes dotted the surface to deface the entire material. One trouser leg was cut off at the knee, leaving ragged edges, and the other leg hung

down over his muddy field boots. His shirt was unpressed and wrinkled to the point of making a launderer cuss, should a launderer get a look at it, and from the looks of that particular shirt no launderer had ever gotten a chance to look at it and probably never would. The character looked about the room, smiled showing dirty yellowed teeth and a very large red nose, then stumbled across the room to the First Sergeant's desk. "First Sergeant," it said with a very deep Swedish accent.

"Well, what do you want, Yorgenson?"

"I would like to see de Captain about some kloth, Yah."

Top turned back to the record books on his desk.

"See Private First Class Jerome Carter."

Yorgenson shrugged his rounded shoulders and walked the short space to his right, to face Jerry Carter. "I ban see de First Sergeant, an he says I am to see you about some kloth," he directed.

"That's right," said Jerry, taking an official clothing form from a stack on his desk. "Now, what was it you wanted?" he asked, holding his pen ready to write down Yorgenson's answers to the questions that were to follow.

"Yust a pair of pents."

"You'll have to answer a few questions first," told Jerry.

"Dat, I expected....Shoot," shrugged Yorgenson.

Jerry started the procedure. "Where were you born?"

"Eli, Minnesota."

"When?"

"Yanuary, nineteen twenty and four."

"Why...errr...How long have you been in the Marine Corps?"

Yorgenson figured the time on his fingers for several minutes, then started figuring in mid air, as if writing in mid air, feigned erasing the figures after making a mental error. "Two years and two months," he finally answered.

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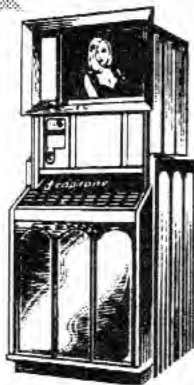
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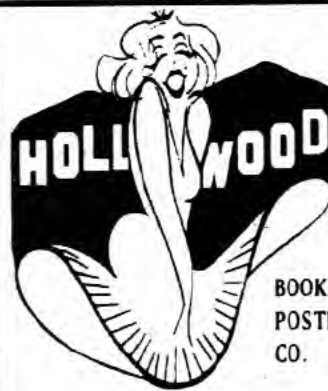
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"Are you married?"

"No," he answered, surprised at the question.

"Do you intend to be?" furthered Jerry into the inquiry.

Yorgenson started to answer but suddenly looked at Jerry with a puzzled expression. "Are you sure to get de right form?"

"Answer the question," shouted Jerry firmly, trying his best to imitate the First Sergeant's booming voice.

Yorgenson backed up, then settled back to his original spot. "Someday I will get married, certainly...You betcha."

Jerry wrote this into the report then looked up into the man's face again, after sneaking a wink toward Elbo.

"What is the name of the girl you intend to marry?"

Yorgenson threw his hands up in despair. "So how should I know de girl's name when I don't even got engaged yet?"

Jerry looked at Yorgenson then at the form, then back at Yorgenson. "Hummmmm. That brings up a problem. I can't give you an okay for clothing unless this clothing form is filled out properly and in detail. This will have to go to a higher authority. Take this form to Senior PFC Paul Bender, right over there." Jerry pointed to Elbo and tried vainly to suppress the grin which wanted to force open the corners of his mouth. Elbo, meanwhile, prepared himself to accept the character.

Yorgenson had shrugged his shoulders, accepted the uncompleted form Jerry held out to him and made his way across the office to Elbo. "The PFC over there, says I am to give you dis form. All I want is some pents."

Elbo took the form and examined it. "Hummmmmmm. Don't know your intended's name, huh?"

Yorgenson let his hands fly hopelessly in the air. "It's so important this name for yust a pair of pents?"

"You'd better take this form over to the First Sergeant."

Yorgenson shook his head. "But I yust seen de First Sergeant and he sent me to see de PFC. I seen de PFC and he tells me I gotta see you, de senior PFC."

Elbo shrugged. "If you want any pants you'll have to fill out this form in detail. Unless that is done you will have to get an okay from the First Sergeant. There is nothing more I can do about it so there is no need for you to argue with me."

Yorgenson took the form with no further adieu and walked back across the room to the First Sergeant.

"First Sergeant," he said officially. "I have come back."

Top took the form from Yorgenson and examined it. "Hummmmmmm," he said.

"Everybody is hummmmmmmmming," cried Yorgenson. "You'll have to see the Captain."

"All over again it starts....In de First place, de Captain is who I'm asking to see," exclaimed Yorgenson, starting for the Captain's desk.

"Captain," the First Sergeant called loud enough for the Casual Company Commanding Officer to hear. "PFC Yorgenson would like to see you about a clothing issue."

The Captain looked up from his newspaper. "Send him over." The Captain turned to Jerry. "Jerry, get me his service record book."

Jerry took Yorgenson's service record book from the file and laid it within the Captain's reach, as Yorgenson came up to the Captain and proceeded to lean on the edge of the desk with his right hand and cross his legs, standing with his full weight on his left foot and right toe hanging loosely over it.

"I would like to get some pents, green, please," he related to the Captain.

"You would...I mean, you would, would you," questioned the Captain turning once more to his newspaper.

"Yes sir, I would, if'n I could," replied, the getting tired of his run around, Yorgenson.

The Captain threw his paper violently to the desk. "Well, if you're too damned lazy to stand up, then by

God, I'm too damned lazy to give you any pants."

The words threw Yorgenson to his feet, and he rocked to attention. "Zorry Zir," he stuttered.

The fire in the Captain's eyes died as he put his cigar on the ash tray and again picked up his newspaper. "What's wrong with the ones you have on? They look alright to me," he said, paying no attention to the individual before him, nor to his pants for that matter.

Yorgenson surveyed the torn, beyond repair, trousers. "I tink day are ripped, yust a little."

The Captain's eyes once more met Yorgenson's. "Have you a needle and thread?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you'd better learn how to use it." The Captain opened the service record book and turned to the clothing issue page. "How long have to had those pants?"

Once again Yorgenson started the long process of figuring up the time on his fingers and in mid-air. Again he made a mistake, erased it out of the air with his sleeve and started all over again. As he figured this time he mumbled the months quite audible, to himself and the others in the office. "September...Nodly...Yuneuary...Errr...two years, sir," he finally deduced and declared.

The Captain fairly shouted. "Two years...?"

"I said that," replied Yorgenson.

"Two years...?" came the Captain's voice again, repeating himself.

"You said that," informed Yorgenson.

"Good, God man," continued the Captain notheeding Yorgenson's little joke and saying his words in a definitely angered tone. "When are you recruits going to learn to take care of your clothing." For a moment the Captain simmered down, while Yorgenson shook in his shredded trousers. Finally the Captain said. "Is this all you want, green pants?"

"Yes, sir," smiled Yorgenson, new hope filling his gleaming face. He wanted those trousers so badly. After all, why else would he have gone to all the trouble and toil of sandpapering and cutting at the ones he already had, so they would look weather



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worn, and time torn. He just wanted new pants, and he meant to have them. The old ones had lasted two years. Now was the time to get new ones.

The Captain gave the sloppy mess before him another screwing, then picked up his newspaper. "Alright," he said. "Go over to that little room on the left in the hall as you go out. The man in there will issue new trousers to you. Tell him I said it was alright, and give him this form." The Captain scrawled his name across the face of the clothing form and handed it to Yorgenson.

Yorgenson's face lightened up under his two day old beard as he accepted the form from the Captain. He had won out at last. He had fooled the Marine Office and gotten new pants. Everyone said and bet that he couldn't get away with it. They had all said the Marine Office would detect that the trousers had not come to such a terrific end due to normal wear and tear. But he had won out. He'd show them all how smart he was. "Thank you, sir," he cried and left the office as quickly as he possibly could.

The Captain rose from his desk and went to the door. He opened it and yelled. "Turn on those green lights, here comes one for green pants," he said closing the door and turning back to the office. His face full of smiles, he seated himself. The smile, however, only lasted until he saw his carbine, still untouched by any cleaning rag. "Hasn't anyone cleaned my carbine yet?" He screamed.

The silent, unofficial office, became a noisy, busy, official sounding room.

Chapter Nine

For several moments after the Yorgenson incident, the First Sergeant sat looking idly about the four walls of the Marine Office. For the lack of anything else to do, Top unconsciously picked at his nose, then tore off small bits of paper from the scattered sheets on his desk, rolled them into little balls and popped each into the ash tray on the right corner of his desk. Each man in the office seemed to be doing his work, at least it appeared that way. The Captain, every so often,

turned the pages of his newspaper, laughed at or with, an article he approved of and cursed when he found one that he did not approve of. Once during his reading Captain Robert Roberts became very angry and threw his paper to his desk violently, but retrieved it a moment later to continue his reading. Top dreamily picked up his pack of cards then tossed them aside to take up a pack of cigarettes, from which he selected one cigarette and lighted it. He didn't smoke very much, but when he was uneasy he would indulge, and if he was worried he became a regular chain smoker. He inhaled deeply three or four times then crushed the cigarette out in the ashtray which held the little balls of paper. He watched the last ember die, then lifted the ashtray and spilled its contents into the wastepaper basket for a moment until he assured himself that no smoke issued from it, then he replaced the ashtray to its rightful place on his desk. A moment longer he stared at the seemingly busy people, then he felt he had to break the silence.

"Who's got the new deck of playing cards?" he inquired. "These are all torn....Can't even count the spots on them anymore." The First Sergeant indicated the much used deck of playing cards he kept on his desk.

Elbo looked up. "Here they are, Top." He reached for, retrieved, and threw the new deck of cards to the First Sergeant. Hashmark caught them with a grunt.

The Captain, unseen by others, due to the fact he had his face hidden in the folds of his newspaper, had heard this transaction. He smiled to himself as he silently planned his little joke. A moment later, with the plan firmly fixed in his mind he layed the newspaper down. "Ohh, say, Top," he started. "Ensign Mulears of the record office stopped me in the Ships Service after lunch. Wanted to see you about something or other. You'd better go see him right away, it's only across the road. I forgot all about telling you when I came in."

Hashmark looked up, startled, and in disbelief. "What in the world have I done now?"

Top returned the cards he was holding to his desk

and walked quickly from the office.

The Captain waited until he was sure hashmark had gone far enough away from the office, then got up from his chair and walked to the First Sergeant's desk. He lifted the deck of playing cards, then shuffled through them until he found the four aces. These he extracted from the deck. "Poor Old Hashmark," he mused, as Jim entered quietly and seated himself.

"What's up, Captain?" questioned Jerry who had been watching the whole procedure.

"I wonder how long Top will play without these," said the Captain, holding up the four aces he had extracted from the deck. "I took the aces out of the deck."

Jerry smiled broadly. "I'll take ten dollars worth of anybody's money against my twenty, that he plays all day and doesn't even miss them," he laughed as the Captain returned to his own desk, hiding the aces under the blotter as he sat down.

Elbo looked up in answer to Jerry's ready bet. "Do you think we look silly? No bet."

Jim turned on them "Don't under estimate the Top kick. If he has aces up his sleeve that he usually has during our poker games, he'll just slip them in the game after a time."

"Speaking of poker..." started Elbo.

"Not in front of me," cut in the Captain. "What I can't see or hear of...I can't stop."

"Right, sir," agreed Elbo.

The Captain let the office again become silent before he asked. "Any transfer orders come through from the main base?"

"Not in the last week, sir," answered Elbo, adding, "Are you expecting yours sir?"

"No such luck," sighed the Commanding Officer of the Casual Company. "I'm stuck in this hole for the rest of my life."

"Maybe they'll get wised up in Washington, one of these days, that they are keeping good men down, when they are shipped to a place like this," related Staff Sergeant Jim Armstrong.

(continued)

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The Captain leaned into the discussion as well as his chair. "This may come as a surprise boys, but we were all shanghaied here for one reason or another." "Not me," corrected Elbo, quickly. "I deserve the rest."

"Rest, huh," replied the Captain, looking sternly at Elbo. "We'll see what can be done about getting you a little extra duty."

"I was only joking Captain," backed Elbo, trying to make quick amends for his uncalled for remark.

Suddenly Jerry remembered something. "Before I forget it, Captain," he began. "Might I be permitted to use the station wagon for a little while this afternoon? I want to run out to our outpost branch and check on those reports that haven't come in as yet."

The Captain had heard this one before. "Is it the reports, or that little WAVE, redhead, in the Navy Office over there that you want to check on?" The Captain smiled as he convinced himself he had hit the nail squarely on the head. Jerry sunk back in his chair trying to avoid his Commanding Officer's eyes. "The last time I let you take the station wagon, it cost the Marine Corps one hundred and fifty bucks to get the fenders back in shape, put on new bumpers and adjust the headlights."

This time Jerry came forward with a very cautious attitude. "I'll be very careful this time, sir. Anyway, how did I know that mud hole we ran into was really a street evacuation that had become flooded?"

The First Sergeant came into the office shaking his head. He looked toward his Commanding Officer as he walked to his desk. "You must have been mistaken, Captain. That Damned Jackass ain't been in his office, or on the base for that matter, all day."

The Captain feigned surprise as he looked toward the First Sergeant. "Hmmm, perhaps he told me a couple of days ago. Oh, well, it can't be of much importance. If he wants you, you'll hear him braying about it."

The First Sergeant accepted this with, "I supposed so." Then he seated himself and picked up his cards.

Jerry tried to suppress a giggle as he saw the

Captain's eyes harden on him. He drew out a handkerchief and made the giggle turn into a coughing fit. The Captain gave him a dubious look then settled back to his newspaper.

The First Sergeant Daniel "Hashmark" O'Hare took the pack of cards from the card board box and laid out seven cards in a row for the game of solitaire, then placed atop each of the seven cards, the correct number for each pile. The first time through the remainder of the pack, he laid out several matching cards, but the second time through, nothing seemed to fit. "Huurumph" said the First Sergeant, picking up the cards from their stacks and re-shuffling them.

Jim watched the scene with suppressed laughter as Elbo turned with a wink to him.

Chapter Ten

The First Sergeant was in the midst of his third game of ace-less solitaire when once more, the office door opened to admit a third unwanted character. The man that entered was one, Private Dubrovnic, neurotic of the first water. As he entered the office, like the winds of a cyclone, his Navy bath robe open at the front, which he wore over his disheveled Navy Pajamas, flew out behind him like a pair of giant wings. The hair on Dubrovnic's head was quite thin on top and it looked he would soon be bald headed. Some of his close friends had often said Dubrovnic had had a full head of hair when he enlisted, but had lost most of it by scratching his head for ideas on how to get out of the Marine Corps.

After his speedy entrance into the office, Dubrovnic shouted to Top, "Well, I'm back again."

"So what," the First Sergeant replied, not giving a damn. "I suppose it's about the same old thing," he added.

"What else? For ten months I have been asking you, and what do you keep telling me?"

"The same thing," replied the First Sergeant, getting out of his chair so his words would appear to have more meaning. "Get the hell out of here!"

"Look here, First Sergeant. I want a furlough. I

demand a furlough. And by Uncle Sam's beard I'm going to get one." He banged his hand on the desk.

Hashmark became dangerously calm. "What did I tell you the last time?"

Private Dubrovnic thought a moment then said, "You said that if I didn't leave, and leave fast, I would find your foot prints embedded in the seat of my trousers."

The First Sergeant saw that Private Dubrovnic got the point. "You get the same bub, and that footprint will go a lot deeper than just the seat of your pants if you don't get out of here quick!"

"Now just hold your teeth a second," Dubrovnic cut him off. "I got to have a furlough. It is very important that I have a furlough and have a furlough quick. My wife is going to have a baby."

Top studied the man with surprise. "You ain't even married," he shouted.

"Still, my wife is going to have a baby," Private Dubrovnic was trying his best to sound convincing.

Top scratched his head. "How can your wife have a baby if you're not married?"

"Never you mind such trifles," shouted Private Dubrovnic. "My wife is going to have a baby and I want, no...I demand a furlough, to go to her."

"My wife had five," started Top gaining momentum of words and loudness as he went along. "Plus seven more and I wasn't there for any of them. And you don't even have a wife, besides you ain't no doctor," Top was shouting. "Get out of here, Dubrovnic, before I lose what little temper I have left."

Hopelessly, Dubrovnic looked toward the Heavens. In a voice that seemed as if the man would burst into tears at any moment, he said. "I've got to have a furlough, there must be somebody's wife that is having a baby." Suddenly an idea struck him. He turned to face Jim and Elbo. He pointed toward them. Jim went for the man as Elbo dived beneath his desk. Private Dubrovnic made it to the door first and was gone. Jim smiled and returned to his desk.

The calm before the storm, again settled over the

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NEW! MC-188 SHEENA, QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE Volume #6 1955. Beautiful Irish McCalla stars as Sheena in this "lost" adventure TV series. **TOUCH OF DEATH** Sheena encounters an unsuspicious trader dealing in contraband ivory. To hide this dastardly deed the natives are convinced Bob has the "touch of death." Can Sheena save him? **THE LASH** (This rare print has a line for approximately 10 minutes.) Sheena meets the diabolical and sadistic criminal, ex-circus strongman Bull Kendall, who is willing to kill for valuable musk oil. Sheena proves she is a match for Bull (Buddy Baer) and his whip! 55 minutes \$19.95



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Marine Casual Company office. For a few minutes the only sound that broke the stilled air, was the rustle of the newspaper as the Captain turned the pages.

Jerry looked for words to break the silence, then finally said, "When are they having another dance down at the main base, Captain?"

"I haven't heard," grunted the Captain, then added, "But the beer party will be on the thirteenth of the month as planned. I think there will be plenty of dancing then."

The office once more fell into one of the many silent lulls, that that particular Marine Casual Company Office found during the twenty-four hours called "a day."

Chapter Eleven

Jerry had once more put three carbon copies and one original, of an official form, into his typewriter and began to type. Jim looked over another unanswered letter then returned the hand written letter to the tattered envelope. He looked, with a quite mixed up expression at the closed envelope then placed it in his pocket over his heart. With his mind on the girl back home, and a wonderful triangle with a girl who only a very short time ago he had been with in the cooling shade of a large oak tree up behind the hospital on the mountainous slope, he extracted the letter, he had written earlier, from his other pocket. For several moments he studied his own hand writing as it spelled out the name of Joan and her address, then he tore the envelope and its contents into small pieces and let them snowfall into his waste basket. With the thoughts of his hour of love and his mind turned to the thoughts of another, equally beautiful girl. He turned toward the Captain. "How is Lieutenant Muscles, Captain?" "I haven't seen her around for a couple of days."

"Muscles?...Now there is a girl for you," the Captain beamed. "I could go for her in a big way."

"You do anyway," prompted Jerry, out of place. "That is, you and she go hunting quite a bit...together."

"Only teaching her the nomenclature of a rifle," explained the Casual Company Commanding Officer, heatedly, and with much waiving of his arms.

"And it's use," he added.

"In the dark?" continued the questioning Jerry.

"Day time, night time, what's the difference? You guys are blindfolded and made to put the rifle back together. I use the cover of night. No difference," said the Captain, then gave a sigh of relief for thinking of such a good answer, so quickly.

"Cover, anyway," replied Elbo, slyly.

The Captain never had been one for quick adlibbing, so he couldn't keep up with the sly questions and remarks that were shot to him all day during the office hours. His clerks were very witty men and quick on the draw. He hated to pull his rank, but one thing he was good at, and that was, changing the subject. And that's exactly what he did. He pulled a pile of clothing slips toward him. "These clothing slips will be the death of me yet..." he announced, but then suddenly thought of a better way of getting out of the mud. He turned on Jerry. "Jerry, what makes you so quiet about your weekend? Didn't you have a good time. I hear no talk about the women you were out with."

Jerry let the love story he had started to read, fall back on his desk and rose from his chair to sit on the corner of his desk. He looked, dreamily off into space for several minutes then began. "The girl I was out with, this week-end, Captain, was so much of a dream, that if I told you about her, you just wouldn't believe me and could she dress."

The Captain sighed. "Here we go again, and to think this time I asked for it." The Captain knew now he had made a mistake. There was no stopping this golden haired, handsome Private First Class once he had gotten started.

Top angrily took the cards in his hands. "Hurrump," he grunted, then proceeded to re-deal the cards into their seven little stacks.

"I tell you, sir," continued Jerry. "This girl was the most luscious, gorgeous creature that God ever made and put on this earth. Why she had the most beautiful golden blonde hair and blue eyes, and what a shape. She was wearing a sweater of light tan and that golden hair fell over her shoulders like drifts of beautiful golden snow..."

"...and that's just what he is doing...snowing..." cut

in Private First Class Paul "Elbo" Bender.

"Or blowing..." added Staff Sergeant Jim Armstrong, feigning a sigh.

"I'm not kidding," defended Jerry, excitedly. "She was like a dream. When she walked, it was like watching beautiful waters rippling over a beautiful space. Never before have I seen a more beautiful, graceful thing."

"Where did you pick her up?" came the voice of doom from the Commanding Officer.

"Captain!...What a thing to say about the girl I love," cried Jerry, hurt. "Errr...She picked me up as I was going through San Bernardino."

"I see, a real nice girl," prompted the Captain.

Jerry stood haughtily. "You never find me with a girl unless she is a nice girl," then he sat down again.

The Captain settled back in his chair. "Yes, I know, Jerry. Just one thing...Was she over fourteen?"

Jerry was furious. "You just don't have any appreciation of beauty. It takes a writer to have that kind of appreciation."

"And you're a writer?" questioned Elbo.

Defending himself, Jerry turned on Elbo. "I classify myself as such. And I'm writing the story of this office one of these days, too."

Elbo leaned over his desk to face Jerry. "And what do I do in this story, writer?"

Hashmark again, angrily mused up the rows of cards on his desk and took them in the position to shuffle again. "Hurrump," he grunted and sat picking his nose as he dealt the cards with one hand.

"That's what he does," said Jerry pointing to the unsuspecting, unhearing, nose picking First Sergeant. "I think I'll title my book, *The First Sergeant's Nose*."

"Very good," laughed the Captain, seeing that someone else was about to receive the subject end of a ribbing. "Very good indeed. For that one, Jerry, you may take the station wagon...Monday. I want to use it tonight."

"Thank you, sir," said Jerry, adding. "But that isn't going to make me ease up on your character in the story any." ■

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JACK HILL SPEAKS!

Interviewed by Michael Copner

The setting was the luxurious Beverly Garland Hotel in North Hollywood. For the day, Jack Hill was a featured guest at one of the popular movie collectibles conventions sponsored by Ray Courts. At the conclusion of the show we were delighted to share supper with Jack Hill and his lovely wife Elke, along with the infamous Johnny Legend. It may have been sheer luck, but a tape recorder just happened to be on hand, and we were able to conduct an interview with Jack Hill about his life and films, and his views on the film industry. Mr. Hill is a relaxed and thoughtful gentleman, and he patiently answered all our questions about his background. Here he speaks of Boris Karloff, the cult classic *Spider Baby*, his work with Roger Corman, and many other subjects.

CULT MOVIES: One of the films I want to ask you about is *Mondo Keyhole*.

JACK HILL: That's one I'd like to forget!

CM: Why?? It was great!

JH: You actually saw it?

CM: Yes, it's got quite a reputation. A friend wanted me to ask you if you were on acid when you made that film.

JH: Not that particular day. That film is just from a time in my life that I'd like to forget.

CM: Did you write *Mondo Keyhole*?

JH: No, I just photographed it. I'll tell you exactly how it came about. I was working for a fellow named John Lamb. He had the first 35mm underwater movie camera and he made documentary films. But he also had a thing going where he shot nudist films in 16mm and sold them through mail order. This was at a time when you couldn't show full nudity in the movie theatres. In fact, I remember John saying that the day would never come when you could show full nudity in the movies; so he had a clouded crystal ball!

I was doing photography and editing for John. He had a lot of left over nudist footage and he had the idea of putting it together and making a feature film out of it. So I took a look at the film, wrote a little script to tie it all together, got some new actors to shoot some tie-in footage, all silent. I shot it all with the camera strapped to my shoulder. Later we got some actors to come in and dub voices into the actor's mouths, and this made them all look pretty professional on the screen. I did some experimental photography for that one, and it did come out looking pretty good.

CM: You did another one for John Lamb entitled *The Raw Ones*.

JH: Yes, that was another one which was essentially a bunch of 16mm nudist shorts strung together to make a feature. I made a soundtrack for it comprised of of Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" ballet. It played well, and the police didn't come in an bust anybody for it, and we were all relieved to find that out! John had a big success not long after that with a film called *Sexual Freedom In Denmark*.

CM: First he predicted no frontal nudity, then he made the first film to shatter that prediction.

JH: Once things broke open, they broke open good! He made a film called *Mermaids Of Tiburon*. Then later, after it was okay to shoot nudity, he went back and shot scenes of lots of naked mermaids with swim fins and re-released it.

CM: Did that become *Aqua Sex*?

JH: That might have been the new title. It was actually a pretty good little film. A lot of great underwater scenes at a time when inexpensive films didn't have that kind of thing. John and I shot all the underwater scenes for *Dementia 13* in my



father's swimming pool. We dressed up the bottom of the pool with seaweed and stuff, and turned it into the ocean floor. That's Francis Ford Coppola's first real movie. Roger Corman broke his pencil in half and threw it at the screen when he saw the first screening of *Dementia 13*; but the film went on to make a lot of money for him. Roger had a way of actually turning purple when he was angry. You could almost see a black cloud over his head — it was kind of spooky to see him get mad!

CM: Were you under a lot of pressure with Corman to shoot *The Terror* in two days?

JH: No, that's another one of those myths that wasn't the way the legend has it. Roger had made another film with Karloff, and at the end of that shooting, these very impressive castle sets were still standing. So he very quickly made a deal with Karloff to make another film on those sets. They brought in the same crew and everything. Ameri-



can International didn't know he was doing it, though they found out later. But initially Roger was paying everybody with his own money, not AIP's. He shot for three days, but he didn't have a script for a whole movie. At the end of three days he didn't have a finished film — he just had a bunch of scenes that he didn't quite know what to do with. About one third of a movie. So first he assigned Francis Coppola to finish the picture; he wrote a whole script revolving around these scenes. They went on location with Jack Nicholson, and shot some new scenes which were supposed to be day for night, but Francis forgot to tell the cameraman that it was day for night. So when it came time to salvage that, Francis had gone on to another film at Warner Brothers or someplace, so they asked me to fix it up. I'd been working as a sound man on the film. But this stuff didn't make sense because it was supposed to be night time and it's all out in the bright daylight. So I wrote still another script and directed some of it, but not all of it. And instead of a three day film it took almost a year to make this one. And it made money for Roger and AIP. If people look at *THE TERROR* and think it's very confusing, this helps explain why.

But these were some of the fun things about it — it was such a topsy-turvy film! Jack Nicholson's wife was in it, Sandra Knight. And by the time Roger got around to shooting the last scenes, Sandra was about eight months pregnant so we could only shoot her from above the waist. I think Roger had waited until they were shooting another big picture for AIP when they'd have another big fancy set. So they had this flood in the castle when the water comes pouring in. He got some guy from Roger's office to double for Karloff, and the double looked nothing like Karloff. Then the huge rocks come crashing down as the castle crumbles and the styrofoam rocks are floating on the water. But the film did nicely. It had a good Ronald Stein musical score, a simple title, and Karloff. It was a great drive-in film.

CM: I've enjoyed those four final Karloff films done for Mexico. Were you happy with the finished results on those?

JH: I don't know. I've never seen them. *Fear Chamber* and *House Of Evil* were pretty good to shoot. They wanted these films to have an international flavor, like an American picture would, rather than have it look like a Mexican film which would have a very limited audience. The only one I ever saw anything of was *Isle Of The Snake People*, and it seemed to me as though they'd changed a few things in it from what we'd shot. They hired me, as an American, to do this job. But then when the Mexican producers saw what we had done, perhaps it didn't look right to them and they changed things to look better to a Mexican audience.

There's a perfect example of that. We had a leading lady part whose role was that of a Temperance worker, and she goes into a bar and smashed all the bottles and everything in the place. And the producer looked at that and said, "Women don't do things like that." He was looking at it from a Mexican point of view with only his background. It was not acceptable to him, but from an American view it works.

CM: I how was Boris Karloff to work with?

JH: Great! He's still the best as far as I'm concerned. When we made these four films he had emphysema and was dying. We had to keep him in a chair most of the time. But he was able to get up and do short scenes. There was one scene where he had to get up and beat someone with his cane, and I was worried that we might have some problems doing that one. But when it came time for Karloff to do the scene he flew out of that chair and did the action — he appeared to really beat the

CULT MOVIES



Jack Hill and Boris Karloff on the set of the four Mexican horror films.

hell out of the other actor! Then he had to sit down and take his oxygen. But he really loved to work. And under seemingly any conditions he was a tremendous actor.

CM: His scenes were all shot on one soundstage here in Hollywood?

JH: Yes, at General Service Studios down on Santa Monica Blvd. My father designed the sets. He'd been an art director ever since the silent movie days. In fact he designed the Sleeping Beauty castle down in Disneyland. He did the submarine interiors for *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*. One of the things about these Mexican films with Boris was that they did have beautiful sets.

CM: How did shooting go?

JH: There were some problems. It was only supposed to be three weeks of shooting with Boris, but it ran into four, mostly because the Mexican actors weren't showing up on time, and they weren't the ones I'd cast, so we had to make a lot of changes. Some of the actors were big stars in Mexico and expected to get more of a star treatment than we were giving them and they got a little bit temperamental. But it went fairly well.

CM: And now, in 1994, your *Spider Baby* is being re-discovered by a whole new audience.

JH: One hopes! That was a nice film to do.

CM: How was Chaney Jr. to work with?

JH: He was wonderful. He was a severe alcoholic at the time. But he liked the script so well that he worked real hard to behave with us. He felt that he hadn't gotten the credit in his career that he'd earned. He was justly proud of his performance in *High Noon*. And his parts in *Of Mice And Men* and *The Wolf Man*. He was a very underrated actor; he seemed a bit jealous of Boris Karloff. He wasn't working very much, but he liked our script and wanted to do the film because it allowed him to do some comedy, which he rarely got a chance to do. He wanted to do this and do it well, so he stayed on the wagon the whole time. That last day of shooting went on until 4:00 A. M. and was a strenuous day. But Lon Chaney was great through to the end.

CM: Did he mention those things — like being envious of Karloff?

JH: Several times he did say, "That guy isn't one bit better than me." Lon told me that Karloff's strong suit might have been his ability to do dialogue well. Lon felt he wasn't very good at dialogue, but if you look at *Spider Baby*, he had many lines and he was pretty good. He'd grown up with his grandparents who were deaf, so he felt like he had learned to communicate with his body and wanted more chances to do visual things. But he was good with his lines.

CM: And you're putting this out on video for the first time now.

JOHNNY LEGEND: (Speaking up for the first time!) When I got the call from Jack about putting his films out on video I was excited that he had access to the negative on *Spider Baby*. That film has a reputation for being one of the most inaccessible films of all. It was released briefly in 1967 or 68, and then vanished, to be found by collectors only in real bad 16mm prints or even worse videos. Now we've got it and have put out like-new videos and have beautiful 35mm prints which we've been putting into theatres again.

JH: When Johnny got a booking at the NuArt

here in Los Angeles I went in on the first night and was just a bit unsure of what to expect. I hadn't really seen *Spider Baby* in years. But I stayed out in the lobby; I didn't want to go in and see what the people might be thinking about this film. But as it was running, I heard people laughing and reacting, so I went in to watch it. This was the first time I'd seen it with an audience, and I was happy because everyone seemed to like it.

JL: We've played it in Boston, New York, Chicago — and it's first run in a lot of these places. The audiences were loving this film.

CM: Let's get some biographical information on Jack Hill. I laughed when Johnny told me you were the only other person in Los Angeles he knows who's from Los Angeles. Everyone else who lives here is from somewhere else.

JH: I was born up in Oxnard, but my parents say I was brought back to Los Angeles the next day. So yes, I've lived here from the beginning.

I was raised in music; writing music, arranging — I was an instrumentalist, doing recordings and symphony work. I played gypsy music in a nightclub, and went on tour with a rock band. When I went back to college to get my degree in music, I got into the film department because I wanted to learn how to score music for films. But once I got into the film department I was encouraged to do more; I wrote a script and ended up making a student film. After that I just fell into it. I got a lot of work as a cameraman, and as a sound man. I did a lot of editing and writing. Then I got involved with Roger Corman, as we've discussed. I worked for him adding time to films that had been sold to television but were too short in running time. *The Wasp Woman* was the first of those. These were films that had been made several years prior and the actors were no longer available or they didn't look the same. It was quite a learning process. Try and take a movie like that and add ten minutes to it without having the original cast.

The next film to come along was *Spider Baby*. I'd written the script and it just happened to fall into the hands of a couple of guys who wanted to make a film. They'd read scripts before, but never anything like this one, so they wanted to make this one.

Then after that I started doing the nudist films. And then I got together with Roger Corman again, and he financed a film I did which ended up being titled *Pit Stop*. Then I got a six month contract at Universal. They'd screened a feature of mine and they liked it so well they put me under contract, sending in properties and sitting there not hearing any answers back, calling people and not having my calls returned. Then one day I came in to work and found someone else's name on my door and someone else sitting on my couch. That was kind of a surrealistic experience from a major studio.

Then I made *The Big Dollhouse* which was a script I found and eventually it was shot down in

(continued)

A bearded Jack Hill directs Switchblade Sisters.



the Philippines. That's one of the most successful low-budget films of all times. I opened in Chicago where they had 15-foot tall cut outs of the girls on top of the theatre marquee, and the film made \$40,000 the first week. Inspired by that I went back the next year and made *The Big Bird Cage*.

Then I got hired by AIP. They had a contract with someone to do a black picture with a female lead. They'd planned on it, then their man took the same picture to Warner Brothers. They were so angry about it at AIP that they wanted me to hurry up and put together the same kind of film at once. They had something in mind that they wanted for the first scene in the film and that was it. So I wrote a script and shot the picture and it became *Coffy*. It was a huge success and made Pam Grier a star, so we came back and made a sequel called *Foxy Brown*. It was originally supposed to be a direct sequel with the *Coffy* character, but the sales department reported that sequels weren't doing as well as they used to and the theatres didn't want any more sequels. So we just changed the name and kept everything else pretty much the same.

After that a fellow named Frank Marino who'd been Roger Corman's sales manager wanted to start his own distribution company and he had a title for a film — *Swinging Cheerleaders*. That's what we started with; just the title! So I got a friend of mine to rough out a script, which I polished up and we filmed it in 12 days. It was a big hit, so I did another one for the same guy called *Switchblade Sisters*, and that was my first flop. It just didn't do very well at the boxoffice.

At around that time I found myself typcast as a certain kind of director and just didn't want to do any more cheap films. I wasn't taken seriously as a director. I could still get work, that wasn't the problem, but I couldn't do big budget films. So I refused to direct any more low budget films, and concentrated mainly on writing scripts.

CM: Is writing what you wanted to do?

JH: No, I still wanted to direct, but in order to do a decent film, I had to come up with my own concepts and write the scripts. Everything I was being offered by other producers was pretty stagnant stuff so I turned it down and tried to create my own material.

CM: What time period was that?

JH: From 1974 to 80. I wrote two scripts for Sandy Howard; one was called *Death Ship*, and the other was *Sitting On The Fire*, and they were both



Hill and Lon Chaney, Jr. on the set of *Spider Baby*.

directed by Canadian directors because they were both Canadian co-productions. Then I shot one with John Saxon called *The Bees* which was shot in Mexico. The man who made a lot of big budget pictures, Irwin Allen, was getting ready to make a similar one to ours called *The Swarm*. Roger Corman and this Mexican producer had the idea that if they could get this film out quicker than *The Swarm* that he'd have a hit on his hands. We shot ours quickly down in Mexico and I was supposed to direct, but when we got down there the union wouldn't let me direct; it had to be a Mexican director. I never saw the finished film. The interesting thing about this is that, of course Roger had the reputation for cashing in on other people's ideas, so Warner Brothers paid Roger to hold back the release of his film until they could get *The Swarm* out there. So Roger cashed in two ways — and then *The Swarm* for Warner Brothers went on to be a dud at the boxoffice.

Then the last one I did for Roger was a sword and sorcery type of thing which was supposed to have a lot of special effects. First he was going to shoot it in Portugal, then Italy. But he got a better deal in Mexico so we ended up going down there. It was a problem from the first day of shooting. For example, in the middle of our shooting the National Mexican Film Vault which was on the stu-

dio lot exploded. They had a bunch of old nitrate film in there which blew up, and nobody knows just how many people were killed. The explosion knocked over cars on the street, it blew the clothes off people, and it blew up the entire lab so we lost a lot of our own film that was there.

There were so many other problems, yet the scenes turned out pretty well in spite of it all. But at about that time the business was changing. Either the kinds of films Roger had been making were no longer being made, or else major studios were doing them with huge budgets. It was difficult to sell a low budget picture and Roger had been losing money very heavily. So instead of putting money into the special effects on this sword and sorcery film, he started cutting back on everything. There are scenes that are supposed to be matte shots where he didn't put in the background; you're just looking over the top of the set. He just put in old music from other films to save money, and also cut the film down to only 80 minutes to save on print costs.

He put this film out and called it *Sorcerers*, a title which had nothing to do with the story. He had a habit of sending people from his office out to the schools with a list of titles; he'd show the list to the kids and ask them which one they'd go to see, and that title would end up on his next production. So *Sorcerers* came out and, surprisingly, it made a lot of money. Roger was so surprised that the theatres were holding this over and he had to rush out and make new prints to accomodate the booking schedule.

That was in 1981, and I have to say I was kind of soured on the movie business by then. That was the last time I directed a film. I've mainly been writing since then.

CM: What's the writing been?

JH: I've written treatments for films which were used to raise money for production. Also, I've begun a novel, which I've been working on for several years. It's an ambitious project, but sometimes there are things you want to say that just can't be said in a movie. The written word becomes the best way to go.

CM: Now, this lovely lady to your left who's been silent the whole time — has she been working with you on your films or writings?

JH: Haven't you met my wife Elke? (We all exchange intros and greetings.)

She worked on *Sorcerers*, and some of the other projects. We met about 21 years ago in Berlin. At that time I'd make a movie and then go off on long vacations, to meet people, and have romances — things like that. And one morning we both happened to be in Berlin, where we met across a breakfast table at the hotel. And here we are two





decades later.

ELKE: They called me a project co-ordinator on one of the films.

JH: Sometimes it's good to have a sympathetic ear for the actors and actresses to complain to, and Elke was good at helping resolve troublesome situations.

CM: After a lifetime of experience in films, how would you advise a young person wanting a career in the movie industry?

JH: Forget it.

CM: That's really how you feel?!

JH: Well, no. (After a long, thoughtful pause.) Okay. In order to be successful in this business you have to give it your all — to live, sleep, and dream movies. You have to be a good promotor, cultivate the right friendships, and just give it 100 per cent. I'm not one to talk, since I just kind of fell into it, had fun times doing films and never took it very seriously. You have to be ready and able to do anything, because your competition is out there and if you won't do it, they will.

I've got to confess it is fun to see these old films of mine being shown again. They aren't going to be great hits, but there was some thought and competence that went into these, and the 1990's audiences are picking up on that. It's a kick to hear new audiences enjoying something that you thought was lost, forgotten and gone forever. It's a lot better than being told that you've made the world's worst movie. ■



Spider Baby has been immaculately transferred direct from the original negative and is available in pristine video perfection for the first time, exclusively from the film's writer/director, and featuring an in-depth interview conducted by Johnny Legend. Send \$29.95 plus \$3.00 postage to: Jack Hill, 6546 Hollywood Blvd., suite 210, Hollywood CA 90028.

REG PARK

by Stephen Flacassier

The history of film is filled with those who would start a genre on the road, and those that would follow in the wake. When it comes to the genre of the Italian "Pepla," those muscle-bound action films of the early sixties, there's no denying that Steve Reeves was the man at the forefront. Many would follow to try and cash in on the success but there was another star of these films who had been standing in Reeves' shadow for years before. It's when Reg Park got on the big screen that he would finally get a chance at the spotlight on his own.

Of all the "actors" who were brought out of the gym and before the camera, Reg Park was the closest one to rival Reeves, and probably could have gotten even closer had he made more films. Park's size was more than impressive, surpassing most of his contemporaries in film and on the posing stage at the time. While not defined by any means as compared to today's bodybuilders, Park still showed a remarkable symmetry to his powerful build, while also carrying a mass that dwarfs the other actors in the same scenes with him, bodybuilder or not. Along with this build is the surprising fact that, while not a trained actor, Park could do much more than just stand there and mouth words while looking great. His portrayals, at least in his first two movies, give the character of Hercules more of a personality, more of a real characterization than was the norm for the genre. By not taking the role quite so seriously but still retaining a sense of respect for the character, and the audience, Park breathes a little more life into the part beyond a flex of a pec. While it might have been nothing more than a nice smile here or there, along with a properly placed arched eyebrow, it's still better than some of the other stars who could come off as that-unto-wood, with little effort, while playing the same part.

If we're to believe the official bios that can be found, Reg Park was born in Leeds, England around 1928, which would make him 67 this year. It's been reported in some of these bio's that he also came from a very wealthy family, although it has not been confirmed. When dealing with official biographical material, it's always best to take the facts given with a grain of salt. Like many young men, Park started in bodybuilding before he was out of his teens, but unlike many, he would continue till he won the Mr. Britain contest at the age of 21. If we've done our math right, it would only be a year later when Park and Reeves would meet in one of the more controversial contests the two would ever compete in. This contest would play the main defining role in how the men were perceived individually, and as competitors of each other. This would be the 1950 Mr. Universe contest. Reeves would win, quite clearly from the judges votes, but those who were there had already been calling the contest a draw between the two men before the judging even started. It should be remembered that, back in 1950, there was no cable sport network to cover this sport as there is today. What coverage there was came in the bodybuilding magazines which were supplemented by photos that got the job done but weren't always the clearest. So it came down to those who were there to spread the legend of the two bodybuilding titans meeting, and what the outcome "might have been." In light of almost 45 years worth of water going under the bridge, it might be hard to fully understand why Reeves coming out over Park was apparently so controversial. Let's face it, someone had to win. But it was the subject of a great amount of second guessing and "If I had been one of the judges..." that would keep the legend smoldering for years to come. Most impor-



THE ALTERNATIVE HERCULES

tantly, this set the futures of the two men. Reeves winning this contest almost a caper to his bodybuilding career, would bring the focus of the sport, which he had already dominated for years, onto Reeves all the more. Park would, from here on, always seem to follow in the steps that Reeves had already set down. A concept that would be helped by the fact that Park would become Mr. Universe the very next year, when Reeves had pretty much retired from competing and didn't take part in the contest. From all indication there was no real rivalry between the two men beyond what can be expected from professional athletes at the top of their careers, but the perception of one would stay with the men for years to come and continue to the big screen.

It's often said that Park took up the role of Hercules, following directly in Reeves footprints by playing the same character, but there isn't that direct a

connection between the films, although similarities do abound. Park seems to have been the first person to star in a movie with "Hercules" being main character after Reeves, but his films are not sequels to Reeves' efforts. It is easy to see why people draw a line between productions though, since most of the crew behind the cameras were carried over from one production company to the next. When it's mainly the men signing the checks that distinguish one series from another, the lines tend to blur. The character had long been in public domain by that time, so nothing could stop the Warner Brothers from starting up their series of films to cash in on the efforts started by Joseph E. Levine's production of *Hercules*. As a matter of fact, Reeves had moved on from the super heroic adventurer type stories and was already focusing on the more historical based movies like *The Last Days Of Pompeii* and *The Trojan Horse*. The market for fantastic adventures based on the classic myths, even if slightly based, still had enough box office draw for other producers to create new films with the classic character. As Reeves went for a more realistic approach to his films, and others started cranking out outlandishly low budgeted muscles vs. monster mini-epics, Park was placed in the best position of all. With the help of director Mario Baba, Park was able to start his movie career in a couple of "Hercules" movies that not only presented the character in a more intelligent light, but still gave the audience the thrills and adventures they came looking for.

Reg Park jumped right into making two of the best films the genre had to offer, one right after the other. So close in fact that it's been a little hard to pin down just which one came first since the release date on both films is 1961. Going for story continuity we're going to tackle *Hercules In The Haunted World* first, since the relationship with the love interest Dianara seems to progress from engagement in this film to the two being married for years in the next. The plot is a good example of the basic story line going on in these earlier films. Hercules returns to a place he's been before, finds there's trouble, this with his girlfriend, which can only be solved by his departing for another location, this time Hell. The adventure in Hell takes up most of the center of the film, with only an occasional brief return to the original setting to keep viewers in mind of what's going on. We're treated to a series of action scenes that include veins that scream and bleed when you cut them, a rock man who tortures Hercules' friends, the prerequisite beautiful women, and the living stone that will heal Hercules' girlfriend. Once Hercules goes through all the trials placed before him, we return to start and conclude this left over story line. Hercules battles none other than Christopher Lee, with an incredibly bad dubbed-in voice, all for the life of Dianara, along with fighting vampires during a total eclipse. The film is better than most, and even flows smoother than Reeves' second Hercules movie, since the two story lines here are well connected and support each other while *Hercules Unchained* comes off as two movies that have been edited together. If there's a down side it's that the film does tend to drag a bit story wise. But it's for the style and atmosphere that it's worth watching and to see Park giving a hint of his new brand of Hercules to the screen. For this first effort, Park plays the character very close to what you'd expect, but not with a full force bravado like so many others in the same role. His Hercules in "...*Haunted World*" is forceful, athletic and sure of himself, but there's a little more going on here and there. When Park picks up and tosses aside the comic relief, Durrancius, Park pauses and looks at the hand he just used. With a smirk on his face, Hercules takes a second to brush off to something left over on his fingertip from when his hands touched the man's tunic, something we get the impression that's not too desirable. It's a quick bit, just for a second or two, but one of the many little things that's thrown in for Park to do that adds personality to what is an already established character who's better known for being

nothing more than a piece of beef in a leather skirt. Park is given more action here than in any of the rest of his films.

Mario Bava, doing triple duty of Director, Director of Photography and one of the scriptwriters, has brought a great comicbook look to the film that, while perfect for the horror aspects of the story, tends to be too dark for the action scenes. Mainly while the characters are in Hell, and then again in the end battle with resurrected vampires, the characters are lit with a strong red light in front of them and to the left, while a strong blue light is used for the backgrounds and shots from behind coming on the right. It makes Park look great, but can also obscure many of the close-ups used to accent his hugely pumped up build. Despite everything else he could bring to the role Park's muscled were the reason he got the job, and are always a main attraction for these films. In one of the times it helps, Park climbs a tree to retrieve a Golden Apple, important for the characters safety when leaving Hell. Lit strongly from below and seen through black tree branches, Park looks incredible. With the bleak setting, the only color in the scene, besides that added by the lighting, comes from Park's own skin tone. A quick shot of his calves during this excursion makes it appear as if someone opened his leg up and inserted gigantic grapefruits under the skin, they're just that large defined. Maybe above all the effects and the muscles, the best example of why this film works is that the character of Hercules is finally made the center of the film, not just a big strong friend around to help out, and for once was played by someone who was not only able to carry it off, but could add something of himself to the role to make it as believable as the character got.

If the first film Park made showed how to do it right, his second entry showed how to do it differently and still work. In *Hercules And The Captive Women*, the plot is a little more subdued and focused, but then, so is Hercules. Hercules teams with a young ruler to save the early state of Greece by sailing off into the unknown danger that threatens them all. Where the story gets more focused is that they don't have to come back to finish another storyline as before, just solve this one problem. Once at the unknown, they find Atlantis, women being turned into stone, a guy in a too-bad-not-to-be-funny lizard costume, cloned warriors, an evil queen and an innocent daughter just perfect for Hercules' sorta whimpy son to prove himself a man for. The story does tend to bog down at times whenever it follows the old "Evil Queen making the moves on Hercules" bit, but they put enough of a spin on it to keep your interest up till the action starts again. Bava isn't around this time, but director Attorio Cattafaza is a worthy successor and nicely handles the additional small bits of comedy as well as the action. It's also in that action that helps this movie stand out from the rest of the pack, with Parks going against type to carry the film to a higher ground. Instead of playing this as the typical macho hero, this time Park's Hercules is more of an adventurer who thinks before he fights but still is ready to fight to help his friends. The most outstanding feature is how Parks doesn't go for the tough as nails, butch to the nines portrayal, and keeps from strutting around the set as if he's doing a pose down instead of acting. He walks normally, reacts normally, making, for once, a totally out of this world character seem pretty human. When his wife tells him of her fears about the planned voyage, Park doesn't just sit there and stare at her waiting for a chance to say his next line. Park looks concerned, he wrinkles his brow, he looks the woman he loves in the eyes and listens to her. Sure, that's what he should have been doing, but it's more than most of the other actors in

these films could carry off. At one point, the evil Queen asks Hercules to pick up and throw a table as far as he can as a show of his strength. As Park walks over to the table, and just at the last second, a smile of great confidence crosses his face. The expression is one of a man who just realized that he can easily do what's been asked of him, not a man who's just acting out a script. It's these little touches that should take Park out of the category of Reeves wanta be's and places him in his own light, at least equal with Reeves. By the way, don't worry, a lower amount of action doesn't mean that there's any less beefcake making it to the screen. It's just that what there is isn't moving as much, but it does give the viewer a good look at what was still one of the largest builds in the sport in a more relaxed setting. Most of the close-ups that



concentrate on his muscles are done during a part in the film where Hercules must tow a ship back to the beach by it's anchor chain. The shots are quick but show the power stored up in Park's build that lays dormant for most of the film.

Unfortunately after this great start, the rest of Park's films sadly came up short in almost every respect. While Park's inclusion was still a plus, there wasn't that much he could do thanks to much lower budgets and lower class production values. In the years that followed the initial push to make these films, the quality of what was coming out was cut down as much as the time to make them was sped up. This resulted in cheaper movies made with less care and cost-cutting past the point where it hurt the film. Maybe a perfect example of this is Park's film, *Hercules, The Avenger*. Most of the film's main body is made-up of scenes from "Captive Women" and "Haunted World," edited together, redialogued so that they fit the new story line, and sandwiched between sparse new film of Park that ties everything up, sort of. While a fascinating exercise in film editing, it's also equally frustrating for anyone who might have paid money to see something totally new and had to settle for a "Best of..." For those who make it to the end, there is a nice fight scene between Park and another actor playing the part of a rogue demigod who's been

impersonating Hercules while our hero's away in film clip land. Park's physical appearance in the new scenes matches the older ones well enough except for the little fact that his chest is clean shaven in the new footage but still has it's hair in the older scenes. Kind of a now you see it, now you don't bit that should help clue anyone in on what's new and what's old if they're not acquainted with the original material. When the plots started getting recycled even for their most loyal audiences, the filmmakers tried moving the characters out of the basic ancient Greek and Roman settings, such as in *Hercules, Prisoner Of Evil*. While the character Park plays is called Hercules, there's no other indication that this is supposed to be the classic character. Actually, since it seems to be set somewhere in Mongolia with hints of Attila the Hun, the character might have been named Hercules only when dubbed into English to help the box office sales. The plot breaks away even more from the old basics when it's revealed that the marauding killer ape-man that Hercules and his men are hunting down in this film is in fact Hercules himself under a spell. The strange Jekyll and Hyde spin on the story is an interesting diversion, but not carried off well enough to be as enjoyable as it might sound. Park's last film, *Machiste In King Solomon Mines* is even more frustrating. The film falls apart by not having Park's character of Machiste show up till almost the half hour point. To add insult to boredom, Park has nothing to do and leaves his expression an almost blank look on his face, even before he's turned into the zombie slave of the evil female interest. Park ends his career living up to the side of beef, can't tact his way out of a paper bag stereotype that he made such strides against. It's very frustrating to see someone who has proved he can do much better work, being made to just walk through the film. On the positive side, there is extensive footage of Machiste filmed on location in South Africa, a place of importance to Park in his private life. There's some beautiful shots of Park walking out in the wilderness, in costume, as animals run past and the great scenery graces the background. If you can get past the blank look on his face, Park still has a great build and gives the fight scenes all he can. A nice touch during one of the fights is when Machiste knocks out a soldier, picks the man up at the ankles and wings him around as his own human club. It's obviously a dummy being man handled, but if it looked real it

wouldn't have been so much fun.

It's said that Park stayed on in South Africa after the movie was made, but some reports have him already living in the country at that time of production. His wife was a native of the country and Park invested the money he earned from these films in a number of businesses in that country. Mostly, and here's a surprise, in gymnasiums and fitness clubs. Park would still keep his hand in bodybuilding but only along the lines of doing guest posings at shows and writing articles for the magazines that had sprung up over the years, but would do no more acting.

So maybe in the great scheme of things, Reg Park will not be able to ever fully come out from the shadow cast by Steve Reeves. For all his hard work and impressive attempts both on the screen and in the posing arena, Park will always be considered just another bodybuilding hunk who tried to be an actor after Reeves did it first. But there is one thing that Park, and Park alone, can lay claim to. In his autobiography, it wasn't Steve Reeves who Arnold Schwarzenegger remembers being in a movie during his teen years. It wasn't Reeves who's build was so impressive up on that movie screen that Arnold credits as one of the main influences that got him interested in bodybuilding. It was Reg Park. ■

TITUS MOODY and GORDON BARCLAY REMEMBER JACK BAKER

by Larry Godsey

On November 13, 1994, well-known porn film star Jack Baker died of cancer. One recent Sunday afternoon, as the last light of the day streamed into a Hollywood-and-Vine office, film maker Titus Moody and actor Gordon Barclay sat with a freshly opened bottle and remembered Jack. I ran the recorder and helped with the bottle

Gordon Barclay: When did you first meet Jack Baker?

Titus Moody: That would have to go back about 20 years; I think Jack and I've been doing projects together for about 20 years now.

GB: So was he working in Porno then?

TM: No, he was working in straight movies. He had a whole bunch of acting parts. His television name was John Anthony Bailey. He was on *M*A*S*H*...

GB: ...He was in *Happy Days*...

TM: And he did something called *Kentucky Fried Movie*. I think when he first got involved in porn movies...

Everybody used my apartment as a movie set, and he used to come there. He did a few little porn parts, and that's how I guess I kind of got to know him. Jack and I produced a movie called *Climb To Sex Dome Three*, which you were one of the main stars of, you know?

GB: Yeah, right, I know. What I remember from *Sex Dome* was how good Jack Baker was. He wrote it.

TM: He wrote it, and it was a damn good movie. Jack and I used to get calls to do personal appearances and things. He'd tag along because I didn't like to drive my car alone — I had minor seizures. We did a whole bunch of stuff at Mondo Video. He would sing the song called "Black Throat." At the time I didn't know it, but that's a very famous song that he did in some porno movies.

I'd sing along with him on stage. It was kind of funny, and we created an act together and got calls to do a lot of personal appearances at different clubs... Club Lingerie, a lot of places. We had big audiences. Years later people would come up to me and say, "You guys were really a good act." And I'd bring the little Chihuahua dog in on the act. (Ed.: Titus's dog, Chi Chi.)

Me and Jack always sipped a little alcohol — brandy was our main drink — and I'd come up dancing on stage and I'd have this glass of brandy and he'd be there and he'd just look at it and try to sing a song, and...

GB: ...reach for it?

TM: ...grab the drink and chug-a-lug it, and everybody would really applaud, because he wasn't a phony, not drinking out of a coffee cup like all these other people do on these interview shows. And so that became part of our act, and we had a good time doing it.

Lots of times if I didn't have my car running we'd have to take the bus home or walk back. We'd get back to my apartment and he'd crash out there. He slept there a lot of times.

GB: Didn't he sometimes sleep in your car too? I remember one morning he appeared out of your

garage, and I knew he wasn't driving...

TM: Yeah, well I had a little Fiat, and it was very comfortable to sleep in. I slept there.

In the last few projects he did, he always wanted to work with the little Chi Chi dog. He's playing a Swahili doctor, and the dog's sitting there next to him...

Then maybe a week later he played his famous role, Willy the Pimp: "These are mah girls, and ah'm gonna get 'em out there, I'm gonna make some money with 'em, and this is mah dog, Chi Chi..." He had on his pimp hat, and — I always had a beautiful wardrobe, beautiful suits — he always used to wear my suits.

GB: He did a whole series of these, called *New Wave Hookers*. He sat around with his "girls" explaining how to make money.

TM: Yeah, Willy the Pimp.

GB: I know the last few years he hadn't been well. Maybe you could say something about his illness.

TM: Ten years ago, maybe 12, some gang hit him in the head with a baseball bat and it caused a severe case of epilepsy.

GB: Oh, was that the scar that...?

TM: Yeah. So the X-rated people took up a little collection...

GB: How long was he in the hospital?

TM: Not that long, but it caused water to get on his brain and caused epilepsy. So I took him to the famous Dr. _____ who put him on Dilantin. It calmed him down a lot, but sometimes he would not have the money for the medication and he didn't want to ask people, though sometimes I'd buy him a prescription. But a lot of times he'd have epileptic fits. He had one in my apartment and I had to pull him down.

I took him out to Oakview, and they didn't know what was wrong with him. He was back and forth, from a convalescent home to the hospital, and then they finally discovered that he had cancer. So they removed his kidneys, and the poor



Jack Baker

man suffered. But not one time did he ever complain. He always talked about how he'd get out and get together, get an apartment, "we'll do this, do that, we'll do some films..."

GB: Was he on heavy medication for the pain?

TM: M'hm. But I thought, this guy isn't going to get out of this place. He was down to about 95 pounds. When he was in the convalescent home, I'd get him beers, cigarettes.

One day I got a call saying they were moving him to County, and I said, well, that's the end of the road, right? I went down there on a Thursday, and he was completely paralyzed. He kept telling the nurse and me he needed a cigarette and a drink. A doctor came in with a bunch of students, and he started talking about porno scripts and movies he'd done, and "I'm gonna get out and do a bunch more movies." And the nurse said to me, "The man can't get out of bed, the man is paralyzed." And I said, "Oh, fuck."

GB: Completely paralyzed?

TM: Up to his neck. He could talk coherently but...

GB: But the cancer had spread through his whole body...

TM: So then on a Sunday morning the morgue called me and said that Jack passed away. They said the cancer spread to his brain.

GB: I don't know how old he was.

TM: He was 47. He died November the 13th, 1994. He was cremated on the 20th.

One more thing I want to say about Jack Baker. I'm a cameraman. One day I noticed my right eye went black on me; I couldn't see. Jack was around at the time, and I said, "Jack, can you help me out?" I think it was five days in a row he took me to the hospital. We'd have to leave like at four o'clock in the morning, sometimes 3:30.

GB: Which hospital was this?

TM: The county hospital. If it wasn't for Jack helping me to go down there, I just don't know. I'm a phobic person, I cannot wait in a line or wait in a room, and Jack sat there with me for those five days. A lot of times when I left the hospital I was totally blind, and I had to hold onto Jack, and he had to drive my car. He stuck with me all those five days, and I'm able to see now because of Jack Baker.

It was dark out now, and the bottle was nearly empty. Titus and Chi Chi saw us to our car. ■



Titus
Moody

THE SAMURAI FILM: A NEGLECTED GENRE, PART 2

by Chris D.

What were the reasons for the samurai film's popularity from the pre-World War 2 era till the early seventies when the amount of samurai films produced dwindled to only a handful each year? Of course, I'm speaking of the genre's popularity in Japan, since in Western nations it's always been, even at its height as a result of kung-fu-film-interest-spillover, an area of marginal interest.

One could as easily ask why any cycle of myths, from the stories of knight errants' chivalry in Britain and Europe during the Middle Ages to the western's emergent popularity in the dime novels of late 19th century America through its cinematic transformation in early 20th century silent films, attracted so much attention. Then talkies, sagebrush saga in film-after-film mutating again in the sixties through the spaghetti westerns—what does the passive viewer in a darkened movie theater vicariously obtain from identifying with these tall tale myths that have only a vague resemblance to reality? The key word here is "identify" as in "identity". What function do heroes perform in myths, be it in literature or film? A cathartic release for pent-up anger and frustrations of generation after generation caught up in boring, functional 9-to-5 existences?

In Japan especially, there had been cataclysmic changes going on from 1860 into the post-WW 2 era circa 1952. The middle class had come into being in mid-19th century in the form of a merchant class. Their emergence *en masse*, boosted by the opening of trade with the West, virtually insured the destruction of the samurai, or warrior, class. Until then, the caste system had been very rigid, with the bottom rung of the social ladder relegated to people considered "non-human"—butchers, undertakers, masseurs, etc., various ethnic groups from immigrant Koreans to the indigenous Ainu tribes. With multitudes of the population from merchant to farmer to tradesman escaping dire poverty, the caste system, while not collapsing altogether, became rickety, unable to support the massive oppression of a significant portion of the population.

One must remember that the samurai, being a privileged warrior class, protectors of the shogunate, had excessive advantage over other members of the populace. One of their most brutal, barbaric rights was the practice of testing one's sword blade on any commoner within reach—if the samurai so desired. If the samurai felt a commoner had slighted or cheated him in any fashion, the samurai had the right to slay the offender on the spot. The victim's family had little recourse to justice being served.

With the disappearance of the samurai as a class—carrying swords became illegal shortly after the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate in the mid-1860s—so, too, went their excessive privilege. Of course, not all samurai were given to excess. Amongst the warrior lineage there were many who believed not only in *bushido*—the warrior's code of duty and fealty to one's master or clan at any price, but a warrior's code tempered in "*giri/ninjo*", acknowledging obligation/duty and humanity.

The popular heroes in the samurai film myths were, with but few exceptions—such as the Loyal 47 Ronin (*CHUSHINGURA*), impoverished ronin, masterless samurai who had, either by choice or fate, been reduced to living amongst the common people. These were the warriors whom most Japanese felt embodied the true samurai spirit—noble men (and sometimes women) who chose to die for what they believed was right and just, whether out of principle or practical application when some villager(s) were being persecuted by merciless authority.

Rejection of the idea of duty to one's master or the Emperor above all else, including the warrior's own family; rejection of the idea of "*chōri*" or outcasts and human "non-men", people not legally regarded as human; the evolution of *giri/ninjo*—obligation and humanity—which also became the linchpin of he-

roes and anti-heroes in the period yakuza film. These were the key changes in thinking, and were, for decades, considered radically subversive ideas.

The values of *giri/ninjo* had already started replacing *bushido/giri* in the mid-19th century or the Tokugawa regime would never have toppled, the rights and excess privilege of the samurai as a special class would've never dissolved.

However, *bushido* was by no means dead. The right wing, nationalistic fanaticism that had distilled every wrongheaded feudal samurai belief in the first part of this century, giving rise to the militaristic Japan of WW2 was actually the last gasp of the hypocritical standards of *bushido*.

So, in the midst of all this cultural and class upheaval, there'd been no dissolution of these ideas in popular art or culture. In other words, in a nutshell, *giri/ninjo* needed to replace *bushido* in a public catharsis in domestic Japan. The emergence of cinema as a national art/entertainment form and point of dissemination of ideas was the best place for this to happen. Pre-WW2, many directors had already been showing masterless samurai taking the part of the



Sanjuro, directed by Akira Kurosawa.

common people against the ruthless oppression of government authority. With the advent of the military government and censorship, film directors were forced to once again portray the beauty of *bushido*—loyalty to one's nation at any cost, whether one believed it right or wrong, whether one had to sacrifice one's livelihood, family or very life.

At the close of WW2, with the entry of the U.S. Occupation forces, swordplay was banned from all *jidai-geki* or period/historical films from 1946-1951. *Chanbara*, or swordplay films, were considered by the U.S. Occupation to be non-democratic, nationalistic, fascist. They were unaware that the majority of directors were also critical of the very same characteristics that they, the Occupation, were trying to stamp out.

It's amusing because many filmmakers such as Daisuke Ito, Akira Kurosawa, Satsuo Yamamoto were unabashedly leftist and totally in favor of a real democracy for the common people. By 1950, the Occupation's toleration, even friendliness towards the Japanese, anti-fascist left had become disguised hostility. Instead of crushing labor unions and strikes themselves, it was common knowledge the U.S. Occupation hired black marketers and yakuza gangsters—some led by former war criminals—to do their dirty work. The very freedom and democracy the U.S. Occupation had fostered was kept from going too far lest the "red" or communist threat come

to power.

Many Japanese intellectuals, labor leaders and artists, particularly filmmakers, were openly incredulous and confused at the strange double standard. After all, the U.S. Occupation had also accomplished in a few short years what centuries of struggling peasants and exploited farmers had failed to do—revolutionary changes in government, especially land reform: cutting-up and distribution of huge land tracts to masses of people whom had previously been little more than indentured slaves.

I'm digressing too much. In any case, the samurai, or *chanbara*/swordplay film, once allowed again, was able to do the same thing it had done pre-war. That is to tell entertaining adventure stories without too much interference. And, beyond entertainment, to deal with subject matter that one could not always deal with openly in "*gendai*" films or films with contemporary, present-day subject matter. Exploitation of the poor, stamping on human rights could be transposed, quite effectively, to the feudal past and be dealt with just as powerfully since the depiction of righting wrongs to achieve mankind's equality knows no temporal boundaries. And the one samurai attribute worthy of the name, the one attribute more characteristic of the true samurai than any other—a tenet that both *bushido* and *giri/ninjo* could have in common—was proudly set forth: "To Live Prepared To Die".

AKIRA KUROSAWA

Kurosawa is the director probably a lot of folks think I should've been concentrating the lion's share of attention on in last issue's Part One. Well, despite my enjoyment of the majority of Kurosawa's films, especially *YOJIMBO*, *SANJURO* and the non-samurai *HIGH AND LOW* (*Tengoku to jigoku*, literally translated *Heaven and Hell* and based on an Ed McBain crime novel), I've found quite a few other directors' work in the samurai genre more rewarding. These other directors may not have the overall consistent body of work behind them as does Kurosawa, but certain individual films—particularly by directors Gosha, Misumi and Okamoto—I've found much more effective in wringing the emotions, memorable as exciting movies. Why? Kurosawa, for all his wealth of perfectionist detail, the excellence he elicits from his performers, the fact he never played the studio game of assigned projects, I find a bit cold and distant. That's always the feeling I retain after seeing even his earlier pictures. There's always, even when dealing with a character's inner, emotional life, an intellectual approach I find removed, almost sterile. Visually there's a reliance on long and medium shots, virtually no close-ups in his later films—witness the bulk of *DODES KA DEN* or the whole first seven or eight minutes of *KAGEMUSHA*, and we never get to really know the characters. *KAGEMUSHA* actually had the potential for being the film to break this pattern, to return to the black, but nevertheless warm humor of *YOJIMBO* and *SANJURO*. Kurosawa originally wrote it for actor Shintaro (*Zatoichi*) Katsu. There was originally a comicspin to the story of a ne'er-do-well thief/nobody about to be executed suddenly picked, because of his uncanny resemblance, to be the double of a warlord general attempting to seize control of the feudal nation. The character actually ends up taking the warlord's place permanently when the original dies from an infected bullet wound. But, on the first day of shooting, due to Katsu insisting on his own private video crew recording his performance, Kurosawa fired him. Replacement, Tatsuya Nakadai, an excellent actor capable of profound nuances, is nevertheless a somewhat cold personage and is not known for a warm, comic persona (as is Katsu). So the film became much more tragic than Kurosawa had originally intended. The balance was upset. And what could've been a masterpiece-collaboration, instead emerged as merely another good, but emotionally-distant film.

(continued)

Some of the Kurosawa films listed below are not samurai films per se, but I've categorized them as such due to their being "jidai-geki" or "in-period".

SAMURAI FILMS OF AKIRA KUROSAWA:
MEN WHO TREAD ON THE TIGER'S TAIL (*Tora No O O Fumu Otoko Tachi*) (1945) 58 min. w/ Denjiro Okochi, Susumu Fujita, Masayuki Mori, Takashi Shimura *** Amer. subtitled VHS has been available, but I don't know the company or if it's still in print. VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

RASHOMON (1950) 88 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Machiko Kyo, Masayuki Mori, Takashi Shimura, Minoru Chiaki

*** Amer. subt. VHS = HOME VISION LASER = CRITERION VHS/LASER(JAPAN) = DAI EI

SEVEN SAMURAI (*Shichinin No Samurai*) (1954) 200 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Takashi Shimura, Daisuke Kato, Isao Kimura, Yoshio Inaba, Minoru Chiaki *** Amer. subt. VHS = HOME VISION LASER = CRITERION VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

THRONE OF BLOOD (*Kumo No Soju or Castle Of The Spider's Web*) (1957) 110 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Isuzu Yamada, Akira Kubo, Minoru Chiaki, Takashi Shimura *** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = HOME VISION LASER = CRITERION VHS/LASER(JAPAN) = TOHO

HIDDEN FORTRESS (*Kakushi Toride No San Aku Nin or Three Bad Men and A Hidden Fortress*) (1958) 139 min.

w/ Toshiro Mifune, Misa Uehara, Minoru Chiaki, Kamatari Fujiwara *** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = HOME VISION or CINEMATEQUE COLLECTION LASER = CRITERION VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

YOJIMBO (*The Bodyguard*) (1961) 110 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Eijiro Tono, Seizaburo Kawazu, Isuzu Yamada, Daisuke Kato, Tatsuya Nakadai, Takashi Shimura ***

Amer. subt. VHS = HOME VISION LASER = CRITERION VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

SANJURO (*Tsubaki Sanjuro*) (1962) 96 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Yuzo Kayama, Tatsuya Nakadai, Akihiko Hirata, Kunie Tanaka Sequel to YOJIMBO. *** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = HOME VISION LASER = CRITERION (should be released soon), previously IMAGE VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

RED BEARD (*Aka Hige*) (1965) 185 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Yuzo Kayama Story of 19th century doctor (Kayama) and his assignment to poor clinic run by doctor known as Red Beard (Mifune). Red Beard becomes his mentor. *** Amer. subt. VHS = CINEMATEQUE COLLECTION (may be re-released soon by HOME VISION since they seem to have most Kurosawa films now) LASER = CRITERION VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

KAGEMUSHA (*Shadow Warrior*) (1980) U.S. / International version: 160 min., Japanese version: 180 min. Prod. Coordinator: Ishiro Honda w/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Tsutomu Yamazaki, Jinpachi Nezu, Kenichi Hagiwara

*** Amer. subt. VHS / LASER = CBS/FOX VHS/LASER(JAPAN) = TOHO

RAN (*Chaos*) (1985) 161 min. Prod. Coord. Ishiro Honda w/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Satoshi Terao, Jinpachi Nezu, Daisuke Ryu, Peter, Mieko Harada *** Amer. subt. VHS/LASER = CBS/FOX VHS/LASER(JAPAN) = PONY CANYON

SOME NON-SAMURAI KUROSAWA FILMS:

SANSHIRO SUGATA (*Judo Saga*) (1943) w/ Susumu Fujita, Denjiro Okochi Kurosawa's first film. *** Amer. subt. VHS = SONY JAPAN FILM COLLECTION VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

DRUNKEN ANGEL (*Yoidore Tenshi*) (1948) w/ Toshiro Mifune, Takashi Shimura *** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = has been available, not sure what co.; probably out-of-print

VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

STRAY DOG (*Nora Inu*) (1949) w/ Toshiro Mifune, Takashi Shimura, Isao Kimura *** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = SONY JAPAN FILM COLLECTION VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

THE BAD SLEEP WELL (*Warui Yatsu Hodo Yoku Nemuru*) w/ Toshiro Mifune, Masayuki Mori, Tatsuya Mihashi, Takashi Shimura, Ko Nishimura *** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = SONY JAPAN FILM COLLECTION LASER = CRITERION VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

HIGH AND LOW (*Tengoku To Jigoku or Heaven And Hell*) w/ Toshiro Mifune, Tatsuya Nakadai, Kyoko Kagawa, Tatsuya Mihashi, Kenjiro Ishiyama *** Amer. subt. VHS = PACIFIC ARTS VIDEO / EAST-WEST CLASSICS LASER = IMAGE VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

DREAMS (*Yume*) (1990) 120 min. Creative Consultant: Ishiro Honda w/ Mitsuko Baisho, Martin Scorsese Amer. subt. VHS/LASER = WARNER BROS. HOME VIDEO VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = WARNER BROS.

DAISUKE ITO

Daisuke Ito was born into a samurai family in 1898. He grew up Christian and leaning to the left. He was originally a pupil of Kaoru Osanai at the Shochiku Cinema Institute. The Institute trained people and developed new cinema methods in the early twenties. Osanai had been a progenitor of the "shingeki" theater movement or modern theater of realism. Ito directed his first film in 1924. Forming a friendship with actor, Denjiro Okochi, they both migrated to NIKKATSU Studios. There Ito became one of the originators of the "nihilistic samurai" archetype, the frustrated hero who no longer believes in the values he's been taught but revolts anyway. Ito utilized period dramas because his social satire, attacks on injustice, had he chosen to tell contempo stories, would never have gotten past the tough strictures of increasingly fascist censors.

NOTE: Most of the following director filmographies (even narrowed down to samurai films) are incomplete. It's very difficult to find complete filmographies, even in Japanese, on the majority of Japanese directors. A case in point: I know from casual asides in two different articles, that Ito directed at least one entry, perhaps more, of one of the several film series (circa 1945-1960) featuring the one-eyed, one-armed swordsman, Tange Sazen. But I could find no documentation re: title, date, actor, studio, etc. Not that we have room to mention every samurai film by each and every director.. ALSO: Many Japanese film studios did not acquire sound technology till several years after America and Europe, thus most Japanese films made pre-1935 - '36 were still silent. Also "benshis", or in-theater narrators of silent films, had a very strong union. They fought sound technology — which would effectively render them obsolete — for several years before finally caving-in to the inevitable.

SOME SAMURAI FILMS BY DAISUKE ITO
DIARY OF CHUJI'S TRAVELS (*Chuji Tabi Ni Hikki*) in three parts: Pt.1: STORY OF KOSHU'S KILLER (*Koshu Satsujin Hen* aka *Swashbuckling in Koshu*); Pt.2 : BLOODY LAUGH IN SHINSHU (*Shinshu Kessho Hen*); Pt.3 : OFFICIAL STORY (*Goyo Hen* aka *Chuji's Arrest*) (1927) w/ ? NO TAPE

THE SERVANT (*Gero*) (1927)

OOKA'S TRAIL (1928)

KILL-ONE-MAN-LET-MANY-LIVE SWORD (*Issayasu-Tassho Ken*) (1929)

MAN-SLASHING, HORSE-PIERCING SWORD (*Zanjin Zamba Ken*) (1930)

A RONIN, NIGHT AND DAY (*Ronin Chuya*) (1930)

KURAMA TENGU APPEARS IN YOKOHAMA (*Kurama Tengu Yokohama Ni Aruwaru*) (1942) 91 min. w/ Kanjiro Arashi #26 in Kurama Tengu series (Daiei) VHS(JAPAN) = KINEMA

THE PALTRY RONIN FORCES HIS WAY THROUGH (*Suronin Makaritoru*) (1947) 80 min. w/ Tsumasaburo Bando, Ryutaro Otomo Famous for delivering an exciting story/ *mise en scene* without any of the forbidden swordplay (banned by U.S. Occupation), instead relying on a climactic chase of the hero (Bando). The character, Iganosuke, turns to face his pursuers from atop a roof, jumps into their

midst, sealing his fate and insuring his own death. VHS (JAPAN) = KINEMA

FIVE MEN FROM EDO (*Oo Edo Gonin Otoko*) (1951) 132 min. w/ Tsumasaburo Bando, Utaemon Ichikawa, Isuzu Yamada, Kokichi Takada VHS(JAPAN) = SHOCHIKU

THE SERVANT'S HEAD (*Gero No Kubi*) (1955) 98 min. w/ Tetsuro Tamba (Shinto Studios) NO TAPE

GAY MASQUERADE (*Benten Kozo or Benten, The Thief*) (1958) 86 min. w/ Raizo Ichikawa, Shintaro Katsu Story adapted from a kabuki play of gallant thief (Ichikawa) trying to help young woman and her father victimized by cruel officials. He commits impromptu hara-kiri in front of his pursuers at the end. Also filmed by TOEI in 1960 by director Ko Sasaki with female star, Hibari Misora in Benten role and Tomisaburo Wakayama supporting. *** VHS (JAPAN) = DAI EI/KINEMA LASER(JAPAN) = DAI EI/PIONEER

JAN ARIMA NO SHUGEKI (1959) w/ Raizo Ichikawa, Junko Kano Story of Christian samurai and his fellows, their persecution and involvement with 17th century westerners. (Daiei) NO TAPE

WOMAN AND THE PIRATE (*Onna To Kaizoku*) (1959) 90 min. w/ Kazuo Hasegawa, Machiko Kyo (Daiei) NO TAPE

SCARRED YOSABURO (*Kirare Yosaburo*) (1960) 94 min. w/ Raizo Ichikawa, Tamao Nakamura Another tale from kabuki origins of a handsome, though terribly-scarred thief and his tragic love affair. VHS/LASER(JAPAN) = DAI EI/PIONEER

CONSPIRATOR (*Hangyakujiki aka Rebel of Rebels*) (1961) 110 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Kaneko Iwasaki, Chiyonosuke Azuma I haven't seen it, but supposedly one of Ito's finest films. VHS (JAPAN) = TOEI

GENJI KURO SASSOKI - HIKEN AGE HANO CHO (1962) 98 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Tetsuro Tamba, Mitsuko Sakuramachi Entry in series based on characters created by writer, Renzaburo Shibata (creator of halfbreed samurai, *Kyoshiro Nemuri - Son Of The Black Mass*)

VHS (JAPAN) = TOEI

THIS HEAD IS WANTED FOR 10,000 GOKU (*Kono Kubi Ichiman Goku*) (1963) 93 min. w/ Hashizo Okawa, Mikijiro Hira Story of naive spearman (Okawa) and his victimization by clan of villains. Climax where he's gotten drunk, unawares of the danger around him, then attacked, is unbearably suspenseful. He holds his own against scores of swordsmen. Although nearly mortally wounded, he seems on the brink of triumph until a squad of rifle-armed samurai police appear. His geisha girlfriend attempts to shield him. When they're both cut down, along with some of their commoner friends, the effect is incredibly moving.

*** 1/2 (Toei) unfortunately NO TAPE (I saw chopped-up, pan-and-scan Japanese TV print)

IEYASU TOKUGAWA (*Tokugawa Ieyasu*) (1965) 143 min. Music: Akira Ifukube w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Kinya Kitoji, Takahiro Tamura Story of the famous shogun. VHS (JAPAN) = TOEI

THE AMBITIOUS (*Bakumatsu or Overthrown Regime*) (1970) 121 min. Produced by Kinnosuke Nakamura w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Tatsuya Nakadai, Toshiro Mifune, Katsuo Nakamura Story of the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate and one band of reformers in particular led by Ryoma Sakamoto (Kinnosuke Nakamura). Although a samurai himself, Ryoma saw the inevitable destruction of the samurai as a privileged warrior class and, influenced by Western political thought, wrote manifestoes declaring the equality of all men. Ryoma felt schizophrenic about this since he, himself, had a vested interest in the survival of the samurai class. However, he'd also formed a trading company to do business with the West. In the end, he was assassinated (as depicted in the film) by his friends who believe he'd betrayed them. It's a real pity that this film is not only unavailable in the U.S., but also unavailable in Japan. (Toho) NO TAPE

THE AMBITIOUS was Ito's last film. He undoubtedly would've directed more films after this and before his death in 1981, but an ever-worsening deafness proved an insurmountable obstacle. Ito was also

a prolific writer of screenplays for other directors. Most notable amongst them is his interpretation of the famous story of Tenzen and Yasubei - two of the 47 retainers of CHUSHINGURA fame - called SAMURAI VENDETTA (*Haku Oki* or *Chronicle of Pale Cherry Blossoms*) directed for DAIEI studios in 1959 by Kazuo Mori with Raizo Ichikawa and Shintaro Katsu (available on VHS/LASER from DAIEI/PIONEER). It was remade by director, Kazuo Ikehiro in 1969 as BROKEN SWORDS (*Hiken Yaburi*) with Hiroki Matsukata and Kojiro Hongo (also available on VHS from DAIEI). Other screenplays include ZATOICHI AND THE CHESSEXPERT (*Zatoichi jigoku Tabi* or *Zatoichi's Trip To Hell*) #12 in the film series ('65) directed by Kenji Misumi VHS/LASER(JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER and Amer.subt.VHS = CHANBARA ENTERTAINMENT (see last issue on *Zatoichi*). And SWORDS OF DEATH (*Shinken Shobu* or *Death Swords Match* aka *Musashi Miyamoto* #6) (1970) Dir. Tomu Uchida w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura and Rentaro Mikuni (Only one of the Uchida / Musashi series produced and released by TOHO; all other entries were done in early '60s at TOEI) An out-of-print Amer. subt. VHS was released by VIDEO ACTION.

KIROSU INAGAKI

Hiroshi Inagaki (1905-1980) made his first film, TENKA TAIEI KI (*Record of the Pacific Land?*) in 1928. I don't think it's a samurai or *jidai-geki* piece. Inagaki's films, at least since the mid-1950s, are known for their larger-than-life characterizations and stunningly beautiful color compositions. If one was to look for his American counterparts, there would be large helpings of John Ford, Vincent Minnelli and Cecil B. DeMille with only slightly smaller bits of Raoul Walsh and Brit, Michael Powell. He's renowned for his somewhat old-fashioned approach to action which nevertheless gave birth to many genuinely exciting, though often one-dimensional, adventures. Possibly the most valid criticism of Inagaki is in his depiction of female characters, creatures who usually prevail but only by fighting against their own weak - and weepy natures. The remake of his earlier MUSASHI MIYAMOTO film ('42), known in the U.S. as SAMURAI (*Miyamoto Musashi*) ('54) starring Toshiro Mifune won the foreign film Academy Award for that year. It was followed by Parts Two and Three in 1955. Two other Inagaki films that were very successful on an international scale were the non-samurai RIKISHA MAN (*Muhamatsu No Issho*) in 1958 (another remake of one of his '40s films) with Mifune and winner of Venice Film Festival Gran Prix for 1958; and the epic-length CHUSHINGURA (*The Loyal 47 Ronin*) in 1962.

SOME OF INAGAKI'S SAMURAI FILMS:

DEVOTION TO WANDER (*Horo Zan Mai*) (1928) 60 min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka, Kanjuro Nakamura VHS(JAPAN) = APORO

WANDERERS ON THE ROAD (*Matatabi Waraji*) (1929) NO TAPE

CHUTARO'S VIGIL PLACE - LONG-SOUGHT MOTHER OR THE MOTHER HE NEVER KNEW (*Banbo No Chutaro - Mabuta No Haha*) (1931) 72 min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka VHS(JAPAN) = APORO

YATARO'S TRAVEL HAT (*Yataro Gasa*) (1932) in Two Parts.

THE GREAT BODDHISATVA PASS OR DAIBOSATSU PASS (*Daibosatsu Toge*) (1935) w/ Denjiro Okochi First of many versions, most famous of which is SWORD OF DOOM ('66).

NO TAPE (believed lost)

JOURNEY OF 1001 NIGHTS (*Matatabi Senichiya*) (1936) w/ Kanemon Nakamura

FESTIVAL ACROSS THE SEA (*Umi O Wataru Sairei*) (1941)

DAYS OF GREAT EDO (*Edo Saigo No Hi*) (1941) 72 min. w/ Tsumasaburo Bando, Takashi Shimura VHS (JAPAN) = NIKKATSU/KINEMA

HAWK OF THE NORTH (*Doku Ganryu Masumune*) (1942) 83 min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka, Michitaro Mizushima (Daiei) VHS (JAPAN) = KINEMA

MUSASHI MIYAMOTO - DUEL AT ICHIJIOJI TEMPLE (*Miyamoto Musashi - Ichijoji No Ketto*) (1942)

88 min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka, Takashi Shimura Believed to be one of the films burned by U.S. Occupation for excessive swordplay. (Nikkatsu) NO TAPE

KOJIRO SASAKI (*Sasaki Kojiro*) (1950) 116 min. w/ Uemon Oyatomo Story of the fabled swordsman (whom some believe never existed) supposedly killed in duel with Musashi on Ganryu Island. Inagaki remade it in 1967. (Toho) #1 of 3 VHS (JAPAN) = KINEMA

KOJIRO SASAKI RETURNS (*Zoku Sasaki Kojiro*) (1951) 116 min. w/ Uemon Oyatomo (Toho) #2 of 3 NO TAPE

CONCLUSION - KOJIRO SASAKI'S DUEL ON GANRYU ISLAND (*Kanketsu Hen - Sasaki Kojiro Ganryujima No Ketto*) (1951) 98 min. w/ Uemon Oyatomo, Toshiro Mifune

(Toho) #3 of 3 NO TAPE

SWORD FOR HIRE (*Sengoku Burai*) (1952) 106 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Rentaro Mikuni, Eijiro Tono, Yoshiko Yamaguchi, Takashi Shimura (Toho) VHS(JAPAN) = KINEMA

OMATSURI HANJIRO (1953) 89 min. w/ Kazuo Hasegawa, Rentaro Mikuni (Toho) VHS(JAPAN) = KINEMA

MUSASHI MIYAMOTO (*Miyamoto Musashi aka Samurai 1*) (1954) 103 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Kaoru Yachigusa, Rentaro Mikuni, Mariko Okada Adapted from the 1930's multi-volume novel, *MIYAMOTO MUSASHI* by Eiji Yoshikawa. This five part novel has been the basis for virtually all films on Musashi, except Yasuo Furuhashi's 1954 film, *MUSASHI MIYAMOTO* from TOEI. For description of Inagaki's three Musashi films see section on Tomu Uchida (his six film Musashi series - elsewhere in this article). #1 *** Amer. subt. VHS = HOME VISION LASER = CRITERION

VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

DUEL AT ICHIJIOJI TEMPLE (*Miyamoto Musashi - Ichijoji No Ketto aka Samurai 2*) (1955) 104 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Koji Tsuruta, Akihiko Hirata, Sachio Sakai, Kaoru Yachigusa

*** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = HOME VISION LASER = CRITERION VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

DUEL ON GANRYU ISLAND (*Miyamoto Musashi - Ganryujima No Ketto aka Samurai 3*) (1955) 105 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Koji Tsuruta, Kaoru Yachigusa

*** Amer. subt. VHS = HOME VISION LASER = CRITERION VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

NINJITSU - YAGYU SECRET SCROLL (*Yagyu Bugicho*) (1957) 109 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Koji Tsuruta, Eijiro Tono #1 *** VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

YAGYU SECRET SCROLL - TWIN DRAGONS, SECRET SWORDS (*Yagyu Bugicho - Soryu Hiken*) (1958) 106 min. w/ Koji Tsuruta, Toshiro Mifune, Nobuko Otowa #2 *** VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

SAMURAI SAGA (*Aru Kengo No Shogai*) (1959) 111 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Seizaburo Kawazu Samurai version of the Cyrano de Bergerac story. ** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = VIDEO ACTION (out-of-print)

THREE TREASURES (*Nippon Tanjo aka Birth of Japan*) (1959) 182 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Koji Tsuruta, Nobuko Otowa Amalgam of ancient Japanese legends telling of Prince Yamato, a magic sword and the birth of Japan. Many fantasy elements including multi-headed sea serpent. Remade by TOHO in 1994. *** VHS/LASER(JAPAN) = TOHO

DAREDEVIL IN THE CASTLE (*Osakajo Monogatari or Story of the Osaka Women*) (1961) 95 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Kyoko Kagawa, Isuzu Yamada, Yuriko Hoshi VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

BANDITS ON THE WIND (*Yato Kaze No Taka O Hashiru*) (1961) 111 min. w/ Makoto Sato, Yosuke Natsuki, Somegoro Ichikawa (Toho) VHS(JAPAN) = HOSHIMA

CHUSHINGURA (*Loyal 47 Ronin*) (1962) 204 min. w/ Koshiro Matsumoto, Yuzo Kayama, Yoko Tsukasa, Toshiro Mifune, Tatsuya Mihashi Running time was cut by at least 40-50 minutes when originally released in the U.S. This is probably the most famous version of what is, without question, the most-filmed saga in Japanese film history. The young lord of a clan is goaded into losing his temper by older, vicious member of the shogun's court. When the young lord attacks the older man inside the shogun's castle, he's arrested and forced to commit hara-kiri. His clan is

dissolved, family sent into exile. His loyal 47 samurai, now ronin (or masterless samurai), vow to avenge his death. Many labyrinthine plot threads are woven into this elaborate melodramatic tapestry. Upon completion of their vengeance on all concerned, the 47 also commit hara-kiri.

*** VHS/LASER(JAPAN) = TOHO

YOUNG SWORDSMAN (*Hiken or Secret Sword*) (1963) 106 min. w/ Somegoro Ichikawa, Hiroyuki Nagato (Toho) NO TAPE

WHIRLWIND (*Dai Tatsumaki*) (1964) 106 min. w/ Somegoro Ichikawa, Makoto Sato, Toshiro Mifune LASER(JAPAN) = TOHO, NO TAPE

RISE AGAINST THE SWORD (*Abare Gomon*) (1966) 101 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Makoto Sato, Yuriko Hoshi, Nobuko Otowa (Toho) NO TAPE

KOJIRO (*Sasaki Kojiro*) (1967) 152 min. w/ Kikunosuke Onoe, Yuriko Hoshi, Yoko Tsukasa, Tatsuya Nakadai, Isamu Nagato, Tatsuya Mihashi, Tadao Nakamaru Remake of Inagaki's own three part film from 1950-51. *** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = VIDEO ACTION (out-of-print) VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

UNDER BANNER OF THE SAMURAI (*Furin Kazan*) (1969) 166 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Kinnosuke Nakamura, Yoshiko Sakuma, Masakazu Tamura **

* VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

THE AMBUSH (*Machibuse aka Incident At Blood Pass*) (1970) 120 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Shintaro Katsu, Kinnosuke Nakamura, Ruriko Asaoka, Yuijiro Ishihara ***

(I've seen a tape of subtitled Hawaiian TV broadcast) (Toho) NO TAPE

OTHER NON-SAMURAI INAGAKI FILMS:

LIFE OF MATSU, THE UNTAMED (*Muhamatsu No Issho*) (1943) 80 min. w/ Tsumasaburo Bando Story of a rickisha man and his unrequited love for a highborn woman and her son, how he basically looks after them from behind the scenes even though the attraction and care, because of class barriers, can never be returned. Thought of by many Japanese critics to be Inagaki's best film. Many of them also consider the 1958 remake w/ Mifune to pale in comparison. (Daiei) VHS(JAPAN) = KINEMA

RIKISHA MAN (*Muhamatsu No Issho aka Life Of Matsu The Untamed*) (1958) 104 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune This won the Venice Film Festival Gran Prix in 1958 (even though supposedly not as good as original). This is the version best known internationally. Amer. subt. VHS = VIDEO ACTION (out-of-print)

KIHACHI OKAMOTO

Kihachi Okamoto was born in 1924. He directed his first film, MARRIAGE IN GENERAL (*Kekkon No Subete*) in 1958. He soon plunged into directing many of TOHO's gangster films (more influenced by American gangster pictures than Japan's homeborn yakuza variety). Most of these featured duo-pairings of such TOHO stars as Toshiro Mifune, Koji Tsuruta (soon to migrate to TOEI and yakuza superstardom), Makoto Sato, Yuzo Kayama and Tatsuya Mihashi. This is where Okamoto cut his action teeth, later to be seen to much greater effect in his samurai films. Okamoto also wrote and directed several of the popular (in Japan) satirical war film series DESPERADO OUT-POST (*Dokuritsu Gurentai*) ('59), the avant-garde satire/war film THE HUMAN BULLET (*Nikudan*) ('68) (so disorienting of narrative it was released through ATG) and the excellent, Strangelovian action/satire, AGE OF ASSASSINS (*Satsujin Kyojidan*) ('67).

SAMURAI FILMS OF KIHACHI OKAMOTO:

WARRING CLANS (*Sengoku Yaro*) (1963) 97 min. w/ Yuzo Kayama, Makoto Sato, Ichiro Nakatani, Tadao Nakamaru Has one of the most atmospherically evocative, just-plain-exciting opening sequences of any 60's action film - let alone samurai/ninja film - I've seen. Kayama is challenged by ninja, Nakamaru, on misty mountainside; they fight, Kayama flips him over the cliff (supposedly). Ruffian, Nakatani, appears, they bandy about, establish they're on the same side and settle down to eat rice balls when they're attacked by another ninja. Incredible cinema-

(continued)

tography and great score by Masaru Sato. Only problem with this is it gets bogged-down with too much humor during its middle third. Still a great ninja/samurai picture. *** VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

SAMURAI ASSASSIN (*Samurai*) (1965) 124 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Yunosuke Ito, Michio Aratama, Kojiro Matsumoto Mifune is drunken, overreaching swordsman with plenty of prowess. We learn through flashbacks that he was once tonsured and a respected member of a clan. However, upon discovering his illegitimate status, he loses all self-esteem and suffers from an identity crisis. He falls in with anti-shogunate collaborators planning to kill the local lord. The traitors, led by Ito, decide that Mifune is too unstable to be involved in the assassination and plot to kill him. Mifune not only survives, but joins the attack on the lord at the film's snowy climax. Ironically, every one of the anti-shogunate faction, along with most of the lord's men, are mortally wounded — leaving Mifune to complete the killing. Unbeknownst to both Mifune and the lord he decapitates, the lord is his long-lost father. It's surprising this hasn't ever been licensed/released here in U.S. on subtitled video. *** VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

SWORD OF DOOM (*Daibosatsu Toge or The Great Bodhi Satva Pass*) (1966) 122 min. w/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Toshiro Mifune, Yuzo Kayama, Michio Aratama, Ko Nishimura, Kei Sato The most famous (in the West, anyway) version of *THE GREAT BODHISATVA PASS* novel (the three part series directed by Kenji Misumi/Kazuo Mori for DAIEI w/ R. Ichikawa was covered in Part One of this article last issue). Incredibly stark black-and-white cinematography, an ominous, sparse score by Masaru Sato and Nakadai's psychotic performance as Tsukue make this version perhaps the most haunting and nihilistic in tone. Too bad it wasn't successful at the Japanese box-office, and then we could've seen Parts Two and Three as interpreted by Okamoto and Nakadai. Hey, come on, CRITERION, get hip and release a letterboxed disc of this (as well as next three masterpieces below!). *** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = AVCO EMBASSY (probably out-of-print) VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

KILL! (*Kiru*) (1968) 115 min. w/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Etsushi Takahashi, Tadao Nakamaru, Eijiro Tono, Yuriko Hoshi My favorite of Okamoto's samurai films, with Nakadai and Takahashi impoverished ronin stranded in a windswept, dustblown ghost town that will be the stage for numerous bloody battles between two rival clans. This film, with its nihilistic story leavened with just the right amount of humor, its ghost town ambience, its atmosphere of continuous brutal violence and torture and especially its electric-guitar-heavy score by Masaru Sato, is the samurai film most similar to the spaghetti westerns being directed by Sergio Corbucci (*THE GREAT SILENCE*, *PROFESSIONAL GUN*, *COMPANEROS*) in Europe around the same time. Except it's even better! Incredibly exciting. Why this film hasn't been licensed for U.S. video release, whatever the reason, is a crime. **** VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

RED LION (*Akage*) (1969) 116 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Shima Iwashita, Etsushi Takahashi, Yunosuke Ito, Takahiro Tamura, Minoru Terada Another excellent film. Mifune plays a farmer's son who's left home to join the troops fighting against Tokugawa's forces in the 1860s. The Red Lion refers to the mane of artificial red hair worn by various troop officers. The generals wear white manes. The officer in charge of Mifune's regiment (Tamura) regards him as something of a simpleton and not suited for the job of advance scout to the next village they plan to liberate from a corrupt daimyo and money-grubbing landlords. However, it's Mifune's hometown. Graced with a gift-for-gab, despite a stammer, Mifune talks his way into not only being the advance rider, but also borrowing the captain's red mane until the captain can arrive with the entire regiment. Singlehandedly, Mifune liberates the village, and the townspeople are bewildered that the former village buffoon has supposedly made something of himself. Ito plays the daimyo squeezing taxes from farmers who are just too broke to pay, holding hostages until he gets his money. Once Mifune appears with his proclamation

of "Ejainaka" (exclamation/motto of common people shouted in unison which roughly translates "Isn't it great?" or "What-the-hell!" because they're soon to be free at last), Ito is toppled. But it's not surprising the tables eventually turn back. It seems the white-maned generals have just been using the red-maned officers and their former regiments as cannon fodder. Once the Tokugawa regime has definitely fallen, they go back on their promises to cut taxes in half and distribute land parcels to farmers. In the process, red-maned officers are executed. Mifune and his girl, Iwashita, try to keep the village liberated to no avail. I'm going into too much detail. Extremely entertaining. *** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = VIDEO ACTION (out-of-print, though may be released again eventually by CHANBARA ENTERTAINMENT)

ZATOICHI MEETS YOJIMBO (*Zatoichi To Yojimbo*) (1970) 116 min. w/ Shintaro Katsu, Toshiro Mifune, Ayako Wakao #2 in ZATOICHI, BLIND SWORDS-MAN series (see last issue's part one of this article for story description). *** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = VIDEO ACTION (out-of-print) VHS (JAPAN) = TOHO

OTHER NON-SAMURAI OKAMOTO FILMS

DESPERADO OUTPOST (*Dokuritsu Gurentai*) (1959) 109 min. w/ Makoto Sato, Ichiro Nakatani, Koji Tsuruta, Tadao Nakamaru #1 in series *** VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

DESPERADO OUTPOST 2 (*Dokuritsu Gurentai Nishi He*) (1960) 107 min. w/ Yuzo Kayama, Makoto Sato, Ichiro Nakatani #2 in series VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO

BLOOD AND SAND - DESPERADO OUTPOST (*Chi To Suna - Dokuritsu Gurentai*) (1965) 131 min. Produced by Mifune w/ Toshiro Mifune, Yunosuke Ito, Makoto Sato, Tatsuya Mihashi. #7 and last in series VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

UNDERWORLD BOSS (*Ankoku Gai No Kaoyaku*) (1959) 102 min. w/ Koji Tsuruta, Toshiro Mifune, Tadao Nakamaru VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

UNDERWORLD DUEL (*Ankoku Gai No Taiketsu or Underworld Confrontation aka The Last Gunfight*) (1960) 95 min. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Koji Tsuruta, Seizaburo Kawazu, Makoto Sato ** 1/2 VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

BULLETHOLES IN THE UNDERWORLD (*Ankoku Gai No Dankon*) (1961) 73 min. w/ Yuzo Kayama, Makoto Sato, Tatsuya Mihashi (Toho) NO TAPE

BOSS FIGHTING TO THE DEATH AT DAWN (*Kaoyaku Akatsuki Ni Shisu*) (1961) 97 min. w/ Yuzo Kayama, Ichiro Nakatani (Toho) NO TAPE

ALAS, VIOLENT GANG (*AA Boryokudan*) (1964) 95 min. w/ Yunosuke Ito, Ichiro Nakatani VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

AGE OF ASSASSINS (*Satsujin Kyojidai*) (1967) 99 min. (69 min) w/ Tatsuya Nakadai *** 1/2 VHS (JAPAN) = TOHO

THE HUMAN BULLET (*Nikudan*) (1968) 109 min. w/ Minoru Terada *** (Released by ATG) VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

SANSHIRO SUGATA (*Judo Saga*) (1977) 143 min. w/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Tomisaburo Wakayama Yet another remake of Kurosawa's first film (Toho) NO TAPE

NOISY DYNAMITE (*Dainomaito Dondon*) (1978) 142 min. w/ Bunta Sugawara, Kinya Kitoji, Kanjuro Arashi Seems to be tongue-in-cheek yakuza film. (Toei/Daiei Co-production) VHS(JAPAN) = DAIEI

BLOOD TYPE: BLUE (*Burukkuri Sumasu*) (1978) 134 min. w/ Tatsuya Nakadai Sci-fi thriller with serious overtones about people whom were exposed to UFOs/discriminated against when their blood turns blue. Nakadai plays an investigative reporter. (Toho) NO TAPE

TOMU UCHIDA

Tomu Uchida was born in 1898. He directed his first film in 1927. During the late twenties and throughout the thirties he was associated with "leftist tendency" films such as *A LIVING DOLL* (*Ikeru Ningyo*) (29) and *THE REVENGE CHAMPION* (*Adauchi Senshu*) (31) and films of "critical realism" such as *UNENDING ADVANCE* (*Kagirinaki Zenshin*)

(37) and *EARTH* (*Tsuchi*) (39). He released a period film in 1940 called *HISTORY* (*Rokishi*). Uchida's film career was interrupted by the war, but not merely for the five-year duration. He was held prisoner in China for nine more years after war's end. According to Japanese film critic, Tadao Saito, Uchida's previous leftist bent and his wartime P.O.W. experiences led many to believe he'd make a leftist film upon his return. However, the film *BLOODY SPEAR ON MOUNT FUJI* proved to be devoid of any political content. Instead it shows the unchecked rage of an aging lancebearer when his young and weak samurai master is murdered by professional swordsmen. The tragicomic sketches and seemingly nostalgic mood in the first half of the picture gives way to a shocking display of bloody carnage as the old retainer, a man without martial arts training, tracks down the men responsible and slays them all. Saito asserts that in *BLOODY SPEAR...*, *SOULS IN THE MOONLIGHT* (Uchida's 3-part version of *GREAT BODHISATVA PASS*) and *BEAUTIFUL YOSHIWARA AND THE MURDER OF HUNDREDS*, "...Uchida transforms the main theme of 1950s' leftist movies — the resentment of the underdog erupting against society — into a chain reaction initiated by resentment..." Saito believes that the "true period drama precursors of the climactic fights in modern yakuza movies" can be found in these films by Uchida. Uchida is probably best known in the West for his six films featuring Kinnoyuke Nakamura as famous swordsman, Musashi Miyamoto (see below).

SOME SAMURAI FILMS BY TOMU UCHIDA:

THE REVENGE CHAMPION (*Adauchi Senshu*) (1931) w/ Denjiro Okochi

A BLOODY SPEAR ON MOUNT FUJI (*Chiyari Fuji*) (1955) 95 min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka, Chiyonosuke Azuma, Daisuke Kato VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

DISORDER BY THE KURODA CLAN (*Kuroda Sodo*) (1956) 109 min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka, Ryutaro Otomo (Toei) NO TAPE

THUNDER HIGHWAY (*Abarenbo Kaido*) (1957) 95 min. w/ Shuji Sano, Isuzu Yamada (Toei) NO TAPE

SOULS IN THE MOONLIGHT (*Daibosatsu Toge - Daichi Bu or Great Bodhisatva Pass - Part One*) (1957) 119 min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka, Kinnoyuke Nakamura, Satomi Oka Extremely evocative and atmospheric version of the story of psychotic, sociopathic swordsman, Ryunosuke Tsukue. Only problem with this is that Kataoka is at least twenty years too old for the part. It's a tribute to Uchida that he overcomes such an obvious liability. (For story description see coverage of the Misumi/Mori-directed trilogy for DAIEI with Raizo Ichikawa in last issue's Part One) *** VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

SOULS IN THE MOONLIGHT, PART 2 (*Daibosatsu Toge - Daini Bu or Great Bodhisatva Pass - Part Two*) (1958) 105 min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka, Kinnoyuke Nakamura VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

SOULS IN THE MOONLIGHT - SAGA CONCLUSION (*Daibosatsu Toge - Kanketsu Hen*) (1959) 107 min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka, Kinnoyuke Nakamura, Satomi Oka *** VHS (JAPAN) = TOEI

THE THIEF IS SHOGUN'S KINSMAN (1959) (Toei) NO TAPE

MAN'S AMBITION (*Sake To Onna To Yari or Sake, Women and Spears*) (1960) 99 min. w/ Ryutaro Otomo, Hiromi Hanazono (Toei) NO TAPE

BEAUTIFUL YOSHIWARA AND THE MURDER OF HUNDREDS

(*Yoto Monogatari - Hana No Yoshiwara Hyakunin Giri or Story of a Witch and a Saber - Flower of Yoshiwara and the Cutting-Down of Hundreds*) (1960) 109 min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka, Akiko Yamato Prostitute plying her trade in forbidden neighborhood of Edo is arrested and, as punishment, is banished to Edo's red-light district, sentenced to work as a whore without remuneration. A naive bumpkin (Kataoka) falls in love with her, and she bilks him out of his money. When he realizes her thievery, she laughs at him. He draws his sword and chases her throughout the district until he finally cuts her down. VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

ZEN AND SWORD (*Miyamoto Musashi or Musashi Miyamoto 1 aka Untamed Fury*) (1961) 110 min. w/ Kinnoyuke Nakamura, Wakaba Irie, Isao Kimura,

Rentaro Mikuni, Satomi Oka First installment of Uchida's Musashi series. We follow Musashi (still known as *Takezo*) back from the Battle of Sekigahara to his native village where he's finally caught by the priest, Takuan (Mikuni), after "terrorizing" the countryside as an outlaw. The girl, Otsu, takes pity on him, frees him, and they escape together. This entry ends when lone Musashi - since separated from Otsu for her own good - again runs into priest, Takuan. Takuan brings him to the attic of an ancient castle where Musashi's ancestors perished in battle centuries before. He locks him in with numerous manuscripts on philosophy and the art of war. It's shameful that this is the only one of the series out-on-video in Japan. The films have also never been licensed on U.S. video. Though done on a lower budget with less sumptuous color, they're somewhat better than the Inagaki/Mifune trio of Musashi films. Luckily I've seen tapes of all the series' films from subtitled Hawaiian TV broadcasts. #1 *** 1/2 VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

MUSASHI MIYAMOTO - DUEL WITH OUT END (Miyamoto Musashi - Han Nyazaka no Ketto or Duel at Devil's Mask Pass) (1962) 107 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Wakaba Irie, Isao Kimura, Rentaro Mikuni, Satomi Oka, Rinichi Yamamoto My favorite episode of this series as Musashi emerges from castle attic several years later a much wiser young man intent on wandering the countryside and developing his spirit through swordsmanship. His climactic battle with first a Hozoin priest, then a band of outlaws is feverishly exciting. #2 **** (Toei Studios) NO TAPE

MUSASHI MIYAMOTO - WORTHLESS DUEL (Miyamoto Musashi - Nito Ryu Kaigan or Development of Two-Sword Style) (1963) 104 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Isao Kimura, Wakaba Irie, Ken Takakura Musashi continues his journeys, sometimes with the boy, Jotaro. He makes enemies of the Yoshioka School of Fencing by defeating many of their best swordsmen. They vow revenge. Ken Takakura portrays Kojiro Sasaki. Numbers 3, 4, 5 in the series mark the extremely rare appearance of Takakura in period (samurai) films. He's one of the rare Japanese superstars who became famous by playing virtually no samurai roles, instead rising to fame in countless TOEI yakuza films. *** #3 (Toei Studios) NO TAPE

MUSASHI MIYAMOTO - DUEL AT ICHIJOJI TEMPLE (Miyamoto Musashi - Ichijoji no Ketto) (1964) 128 Min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Ken Takakura, Wakaba Irie, Isao Kimura Musashi faces the whole Yoshioka school after having defeated the school's head. And, using his two-sword style, he fights them all off. This despite having had his best friend's mother, Granny Honiden, spit a needle in one of his eyes. She despises him because she wrongly believes he's the cause of her son's downfall. He also ends up killing the heir/leader of the Yoshioka's, a young boy. He's roundly criticized for this, despite having been set upon by scores of the school's swordsmen. *** 1/2 #4 (Toei Studios) NO TAPE

MUSASHI MIYAMOTO - DUEL ON GANRYU ISLAND (Miyamoto Musashi - Ganryujima no Ketto) (1965) 121 Min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Ken Takakura, Wakaba Irie, Chiezo Kataoka, Rentaro Mikuni, Satomi Oka Musashi faces and defeats Kojiro (Takakura) in a duel on Ganryu Island. *** 1/2 #5 (Toei Studios) NO TAPE

MUSASHI MIYAMOTO - SWORDS OF DEATH (Miyamoto Musashi - Shinken Shobu or Death Swords Match) (1970) 79 Min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Rentaro Mikuni, Hideko Okuyama Musashi visits chain-and-sickle master, Baiken, for instruction, not realizing that Baiken and wife are plotting his death. He'd killed the wife's brother in the Battle of Sekigahara many years before when he was still called Takezo. Baiken, a mercenary/revolutionary, rounds up his small band of followers to help him. Musashi kills them all within a few minutes as day breaks. Baiken and his wife, their son on her back, are left to face Musashi in the wild fields around their ramshackle cottage. Excellent film of an intense story told almost in real time. Also Uchida's last film before his death; he died the same year, 1970. **** #6 (Toho Studios) Amer. subt. VHS = VIDEO ACTION (out-of-print)

SOME OTHER NON-SAMURAI UCHIDA FILMS;

HUNGER STRAITS (Kiga Kaikyō) (1965) 183 Min. w/ Rentaro Mikuni, Ken Takakura, Yoshi Kato, Rinichi Yamamoto Supposedly excellent gangster/yakuza film. VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

THEATRE OF LIFE - HISHAKAKU AND KIRATSUNE (Jinsei Gekishō - Hishakaku to Kiratsune) (1968) 109 min. w. Koji Tsuruta, Ken Takakura, Junko Fuji, Hiroki Matsukata, Minoru Oki, Tomisaburo Wakayama, Masagoro Shimada Reportedly excellent period yakuza film (1920's) and final installment of the THEATRE OF LIFE- HISHAKAKU series (the first three directed by Tadashi Sawashima) #4 and last in series (Toei Studios) NO TAPE.



Swords Of Death, directed by Tomu Uchida.

MASAKI KOBAYASHI

Masaki Kobayashi was born in 1916. He directed MY SON'S YOUTH (Musuko no Seishun), his first picture in 1952. Known primarily for his nine hour-long epic, THE HUMAN CONDITION (Ningen no Joken) consisting of three parts (each three hours): NO GREATER LOVE, ROAD TO ETERNITY, and A SOLDIER'S PRAYER; the atmospheric horror film KWAIDAN and HARA-KIRI (Seppuku). He made only four films which could be considered samurai/period films, but they are of such stature that he's inevitably compared in equal terms to such fellow Japanese directors as Akira Kurosawa, Kenji Mizoguchi and Kon Ichikawa.

SAMURAI FILMS OF MASAKI KOBAYASHI

HARA-KIRI (Seppuku) (1962) 134 min. w/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Rentaro Mikuni, Tetsuro Tamba, Akira Ishihama, Shima Iwashita Nakadai's son-in-law, driven to desperation because of his infant son's illness, goes to a local clan's mansion with the hope of engendering pity, thus charity. He swallows his pride, pretending to intend ritual suicide - hara-kiri (or seppuku). At the time a story was circulating about an impoverished samurai who'd asked at another clan's household to be allowed to commit hara-kiri on their grounds. Moved to pity, the clan asked him to join their clan, and the masterless samurai thus became once more gainfully employed. And had not had to kill himself out of shame. Unfortunately, the clan whom Nakadai's son-in-law has chosen has also heard the story and, wishing to make an example of the young man so other impoverished ronin won't attempt the same thing, force him to go-through with the hara-kiri. As it turns out, the young man had sold his swords to buy medicine for his son. The sadistic clan retainers, refusing to let him leave on his word to return with real swords or to lend him the use of their

weapons, had coerced him into performing the already painful disembowelment with his blunt bamboo blades! We learn all this in flashback as Nakadai relates the story to the clan chamberlain. Nakadai's also requested to commit hara-kiri on the grounds, and asks for three specific clan samurai as his seconds. As Nakadai relates the details, how his grandson and daughter have also died, we realize the seconds are unavailable. We see flashbacks of Nakadai finding the three prime instigators of his son-in-law's death, challenging each of them to duels. He ends each fight not by killing them, but by cutting off their topknot - something which will shame them before their clan and probably result in their own seppuku. At the close of the narrative, Nakadai challenges the whole clan, facing certain death. He dispatches numerous swordsmen and wounds many more before the clan, in desperation, bring in riflemen and cut him down with bullets. The chamberlain, frightened that news of this debacle might reach the shogun's court, bids the man in charge of making entries in the clan's day-to-day journal to record the deaths as deaths-from-illness and mention only that an impoverished ronin had committed seppuku on their grounds. Devastating, with a scarily dissonant, abstract score by Toru Takemitsu. (Although the three duels and Nakadai's final battle with the clan are full of action, this is not an action film and if that's what you're expecting, you may be disappointed for the first hour-or-so. However, I can't recommend this highly enough.) Amer. Subt. VHS = HOME VISION VHS(JAPAN) = SHOCHIKU ****

KWAIDAN (Kaidan aka Ghost Stories aka A Study of Strange Things) (1964) 183 Min. w/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Keiko Kishi, Rentaro Mikuni, Michiyo Aratama, Katsuo Nakamura, Tetsuro Tamba, Takashi Shimura Four exquisitely beautiful ghost stories in atmospheric color: BLACK HAIR, WOMAN OF THE SNOW, HOICHI THE EARLESS, IN A CUP OF TEA. (For more detailed descriptions of the individual stories see Part Three of this article in next issue of Cult Movies) **** Amer. subt. VHS = HOME VISION LASER = CRITERION Not available on tape in Japan!

SAMURAI REBELLION (Joi Uchi aka Rebellion) (1967) Both Alain Silver's book, SAMURAI FILM, and the Japanese CINEMA CLUB '94 volume list this film as running 128 min. However, the TOHO laser disc, which is supposed to be uncut, definitely runs 121 min. Of course, this discrepancy may be a case of time compression. w/ Toshiro Mifune, Tatsuya Nakadai, Go Kato, Michiko Otsuka, Yoko Tsukasa The story of a vassal samurai (Mifune) ordered by his lord to marry the lord's concubine when she becomes pregnant. He accepts the woman. They're happily married for two years when the lord suddenly wants the woman back since the son she's given birth to has become his only heir. Much of the film is quite talky until the family refuses to be broken up and things climax with a spectacular, protracted swordfight. **

* VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO (out-of-print)

INN OF EVIL (Inochi no Ni Furo) (1971) 121 Min. w/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Wakako Sakai, Kei Sato, Shintaro Katsu, Komaki Kurahara A gang of thieves and smugglers who hang out at a particular inn decide to help one of their youngest members when the fellow's girl is sold into prostitution. Performing a perilous job, they're all killed except for one (Nakadai) who escapes with cash to redeem the girl. According to some sources, laced with much black humor. (Released by Toho Studios) NO TAPE

HANZO THE BLADE or RAZOR HANZO (GOYO KIBA) SERIES

FANGS OF PUBLIC OFFICE (Goyo Kiba aka Sword of Justice aka Hanzo The Blade) (1972) Orig. time: 108 Min. video: 90 Min. Dir. Kenji Misumi w/ Shintaro Katsu, Ke Nishimura Katsu Productions (who also brought us Koike's LONE WOLF AND CHILD - Kozure Okami in six excellent features - see Part One of article in last issue) takes a stab at another of Kazuo Koike's comic strips, GOYO KIBA (literally translated: FANGS OF PUBLIC OFFICE) about a burly, scar-toughened, sadistic, saturnine, but honest and (if you're a decent

(continued)

citizen) ultimately compassionate samurai cop in 1860s Edo (Tokyo). There was a trend of blending samurai stories with S & M and softcore sex, and all three of this series' entries pull no punches in that regard. Hanzo (Katsu) submits his own body to the same tortures he perpetrates on suspects or uncooperative witnesses, all in order to achieve indestructibility through endurance. He also gives his prodigious sex organ (always just out-of-frame or obscured by some out-of-focus object) a thorough going-over with boiling hot water, a wooden club (literally beating his meat) and then fucking a contraption full of rock salt! Cooch! All this so he can better use it as an interrogating tool on female captives. He's also given to having his two comical henchmen lower not-too-talkative female witnesses/ suspects (in a net) up-and-down onto his erect member. The absolute agony they undergo quite often changes to ecstasy before the process (or Hanzo) is finished. Hanzo also has his home equipped with numerous secret panels/ recesses hiding all manner of swords, automatic bows-and-arrows, spears and *jittes* (traditional samurai cop weapon made up of a three-tined fork dagger with a long chain secreted in the hollow handle). Spears are also likely to be found beneath floor trapdoors to impale unwelcome guests. Ko Nishimura appears in all three films as Hanzo's colleague/liaison with the shogun, and he's constantly admonishing Hanzo to be more respectful and submissive to his superiors (to no avail). Surprisingly, the S & M and sexist behavior is presented in so matter-of-a-fact manner without excuses or glorification that it ends up being fairly inoffensive (I'm sure there's many of you out there unwilling to believe such a thing is possible - suffice to say I felt the same before seeing these extraordinary films), #1 *** 1/2 VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

FANGS OF PUBLIC OFFICE - RAZOR HANZO'S HELL TORTURE (*Goyo Kiba - Kamisori Hanzo Jigoku Seme aka Sword of Justice 2 - The Snare*) (1973) 89 min. Dir. Yasuzo Masumura w/ Shintaro Katsu, Toshio Kurosawa, Kei Sato, Ko Nishimura. Hanzo uncovers a combination abortion ring/S & M brothel run by a sorceress and bald Buddhist nuns in the local temple. He gets onto the grounds by taking the place of a woman's corpse - an anonymous whore found dead from abortion complications and how Hanzo had discovered the nefarious doings - in a cylindrical, barrel coffin (the type of burial casing used pre-20th century). That night, once Hanzo's two henchmen have buried him in a shallow grave, he waits to make sure that no one is about. He then erupts from the mound/coffin like a white-robed banshee. Inside the temple the sorceress is performing mistress-of-ceremony functions for several rich, middle-aged merchants enraptured in a frenzy of S & M sex with bald, nude nuns. Hanzo literally explodes through the wall and busts everyone. He hauls one particular nun back to his HQ for some erotic interrogation. Afterwards, as the two are about to enjoy some sake in Hanzo's hot tub, a crew of black-masked killers breaks in. It seems that a lord in the shogun's court is affiliated with not only the temple but also a band of murdering thieves (led by gleefully evil Kei Sato) that has been victimizing numerous rich households in Edo. A gory battle ensues with Hanzo emerging the victor. Before long, Hanzo has figured out who the lord is and manages to catch the thieves red-handed. More carnage results, with Sato grabbing a servant girl as hostage. Hanzo's fellow police/superiors as well as a couple of lords - among them the guilty party - gather in the alley beside Hanzo as he attempts to free the girl and capture Sato. It's interesting that despite Hanzo's brutal treatment of both sexes, when put into a situation where innocent lives are at stake, he's the only official willing to go out of his way to insure the victim's safety. Sure enough, he rescues the girl, but Sato is accidentally killed. As Nishimura and other higher-ups congratulate him, Hanzo rudely accuses the guilty lord, offering incontrovertible proof. The next day, after everything is seemingly resolved, Hanzo is challenged by the lord's master swordsman-bodyguard (Toshio Kurosawa). They'd tangled twice before but, since equally matched, things'd always ended in a draw. Now they fight a nerve-racking duel atop a large bridge, and Hanzo finally



Hara-Kiri, directed by Masaki Kobayashi.

is victorious. Late director, Masumura, was probably Japan's most talented, sixties-New-Wave director. He was responsible for many masterpieces, virtually none of which, strangely enough, have ever been licensed in English subtitled form: HOODLUM SOLDIER (*Heitai Yakuza*) ('65) - first in the extremely brutal, satirical nine picture war series with Shintaro Katsu as a misfit gangster drafted into WW2; WITHIN A MILITARY SPY SCHOOL ('66) (*Riku Gun Naka Nogakkoo*) - first in the noirish five picture WW2 spy series with Raizo Ichikawa; TOUGH GUY (*Karakaze Yaro*) ('62) - Yukio Mishima starring in his own self-penned yakuza film, RED ANGEL (*Akai Tenshi*), BLIND BEAST (*Mofu*), LOVE SUICIDES AT SONEZAKI (*Sonezaki Shinju*). #2 **** VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

FANGS OF PUBLIC OFFICE - HAUNTED GOLD (*Goyo Kiba - Oni No Hanzo Yawa Hada Koban or Gold Coins, Soft Flesh and Hanzo's Ghost aka Sword Of Justice 3*) (1974) 84 min. Dir. Yoshio Inoue Written: Yasuzo Masumura w/ Shintaro Katsu, Mako Midori, Ko Nishimura, Mikio Narita, Asao Koike. Third, last, and, even though not bad, easily the least of the trio. When Hanzo's two goony helpers are joking with each other while enjoying a bit of nocturnal fishing, they're scared out-of-their-pants by a horribly-scarred female ghost emerging from the swamp. Breathlessly relating all this to Hanzo, he immediately realizes she's a phony. Going out to the lake himself, he frightens her when she realizes her appearance isn't having the desired effect. She jumps into the water, and Hanzo immediately dives in after her. Before long, she's tied-up in Hanzo's lair. Hanzo discovers she's been guarding a cache of sunken gold pieces (secreted in bamboo poles that've been driven spearlike into the pond's muddy bottom). The rest of the film is spent with Hanzo exposing the usual court corruption. Of course, until he brings the high-echelon thieves to justice, he must constantly fight off various killers after his hide. All three films have what



Fangs Of Public Office, the first Hanzo the Blade film.

seems, at first, out-of-place funky, SHAFT/SUPERFLY-style music scores. But surprisingly enough, the scores work #3 *** VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

The listing of directors and their films below is by no means complete. Even if I had access to complete filmographies, this would be a logistical/space impossibility. Most directors were astoundingly prolific. The average Japanese film director (both good and bad) churning out over eighty films in a twenty-to-thirty year career is not particularly unusual. Some, such as Masahiro Makino and Kazuo Mori, directed well over a hundred films. I've tried to list films and directors below that I feel were fairly consistent in overall quality. Believe me, as far as quantity of samurai films produced, especially between 1950 - 1975, this is a mere drop in the bucket. Reference books that proved invaluable were *THE SAMURAI FILM* by Alain Silver (still in-print from Overlook Press) - despite Silver's fairly expansive filmography at the end, there are still many omissions; his listings probably represent only 1/2 to 2/3 of the *chanbara* or sword pictures released; *CINEMA CLUB '94* (in Japanese, but all film titles are supplied with a *hiragana* alphabet pronunciation key - which I can luckily read) - this is an invaluable tool for the serious student of Japanese film (if you can decipher it) even though it probably only represents listings for a bit more than 1/2 to 2/3 of all Japanese films ever made; also *JAPANESE FILM DIRECTORS* by Audie Bock, Kodansha Press; *REFRAMING JAPANESE CINEMA* by many writers, Univ. of Indiana Press; *CURRENTS IN JAPANESE CINEMA* by Tadao Saito, Kodansha Press; and *JAPANESE FILM POSTERS, VOL. 2* (Paperbound collection of Japanese movie posters, all in full color - with some of the shoddiest glue binding ever!); I also found a few tidbits of info in various back issues of *MARTIAL ARTS MOVIES Magazine*.

MISCELLANEOUS SAMURAI FILMS MASABONU DEME

LAST SWORDSMAN (*Okita Soji*) (1975) w/ Masao Kusakari, Koji Takahashi. Story of tubercular swordsman, Soji, and his involvement with revolutionary faction in days of Tokugawa's overthrow. This is probably the only period film Deme has done - he also directed the excellent *STATION TO HEAVEN* (*Tengoku No Eki*) in 1984 for TOEI. For same subject matter/story as *LAST SWORDSMAN*, see Misumi's '63 *I WANT TO DIE A SAMURAI* (*Shinsengumi Shimatsuki or Account Of Assassins' Leadership*) and Sawashima's '70 *BAND OF ASSASSINS* (*Shinsengumi*) (no relation to the *NINJA, BAND OF ASSASSINS* series at DAIEI). *** 1/2 (I've seen a subtitled broadcast taped off of Hawaiian TV) VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO

KINJI FUKASAKU

LOYAL 47 RONIN - GHOST OF YOTSUYA (*Chushingura Gaidan - Yotsuya Kaidan*) (1994) w/ Eriko Watanabe, Takahiro Tamura. Fukasaku blends the two most-filmed stories in Japan.. Fukasaku has made many samurai films, including an earlier version of *47 RONIN* (*Akojo Danzetsu*) ('78) VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI as well as the supernatural *SAMURAI REINCARNATION* (*Makai Tensho*) Amer. sub. VHS = American TOEI (out-of-print) LASER(JAPAN) = TOEI, but his samurai films seem strangely mediocre. He's best known in Japan for his excellent modern yakuza films such as *BATTLES WITHOUT HONOR OR HUMANITY* (*Jinginaki Tatakai or Gang War Without The Gambling Code*) ('73-'75) (he directed 8 out of 9 of this violent, downbeat series w/ Bunta Sugawara) VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI and *GRAVEYARD OF HONOR AND HUMANITY* (*Jingi No Hakaba or Burial Of The Gambler's Code*) w/ Tetsuya Watari ('75) VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI (Shochiku) (to early for video release)

SADAO FUKADOKO

THE SEARCHING SWORDSMAN (*Onmitsu Kenshi*) (1964) 83 min. w/ Koichi Ose, Junko Fuji, Bin

Amatsu Movie version of the very popular TOEI TV series c.'62. According to *ORIENTAL CINEMA* magazine's Damon Foster, this TV show was also quite popular in Australia where it ran, in dubbed English, under the title *THE SAMURAI*. Supposedly there were even SAMURAI TV series trading cards for all the Aussie kids! #1 of 2 VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

THE SEARCHING SWORDSMAN RETURNS (*Zoku Onmitsu Kenshi*) (1964) 83 min. w/ Koichi Ose, Bin Amatsu #2 of 2 VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

YASUO FURUHATA

(commonly mis-identified as Yasuo Kohata)
MUSASHI MIYAMOTO (*Miyamoto Musashi*) (1954) 84 min. w/ Rentaro Mikuni Infamous for its unorthodox and, some might say unflattering, portrayal of Musashi. Has reputation in West of being an excellent film. (Toei) NO TAPE

SUDDEN ATTACK! (*Geki Totsu - Shogun Iemitsu No Ranshin*) (1989) 110 min. w/ Ken Ogata, Shinichi "Sonny" Chiba, Tetsuro Tamba, Hiroki Matsukata Very violent, bloody big-budget samurai thriller from TOEI. *** VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI (may be out-of-print, but most Japanese video stores have it for rent)

Furuhata (1934-) directed more yakuza films in the late '60s/all through the '70s than anything else, and he's very good. Of particular note is JAPAN'S VIOLENT GANGS - LOYALTY OFFERING MURDER (*Nihon Boryokudan - Koroshi No Sakazuki*) ('72) VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI He still directs films for TOEI.

BUNTARO FUTAGAWA

OROCHI (1925) 75min VHS(JAPAN) = APORO

KON ICHIKAWA

AN ACTOR'S REVENGE (*Yukinojo Henge*) (1963) 113 min. w/ Kazuo Hasegawa, Fujiko Yamamoto, Ayako Wakao, Ganjiro Nakamura, Raizo Ichikawa, Shintaro Katsu Mindblowingly beautiful melodrama featuring Hasegawa in a dual role to commemorate his 30th film! - he plays Yuki, the female impersonator kabuki actor seeking revenge on the evil Nakamura who's responsible for his parents' bankruptcy and death; he also plays a good-hearted burglar who helps Yuki. Setbound, but, much like TOHO's KWAIDAN by Kobayashi, this is an attribute rather than a liability as Ichikawa uses all kinds of imaginative lighting set-ups and color compositions to achieve nearly avant-garde effects. Ichikawa and Katsu, DAIEI's two biggest stars, appear in small roles. ** * 1/2 Amer.subt.VHS = NEW YORKER VIDEO VHS/LASER(JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER

THE WANDERERS (*Matatabi*) (1973) 96 min. w/ Ichiro Ogura, Isao Bito, Kenichi Hagiwara (see section on matatabi films in next issue's part three) *** VHS(JAPAN) = TOHO (probably out-of-print)

COLD WIND MONJIRO'S BAD TEMPER (*Kaettekita Kogarashi Monjiro*) (1993) TV movie featuring same actor who played Monjiro in the original 1970s TV series. He's been a woodcutter for many years but ends up having to pick up his sword again. *** VHS(JAPAN) = PONY CANYON

47 KILLERS (*Yoju Shichinin No Shikaku aka The Loyal 47 Ronin aka Chushingura*) (1994) w/ Ken Takakura One of the two most recent versions of this famous story. The other, also released in '94 and directed by Kinji Fukasaku, combines the 47 Ronin tale with the Yotsuya ghost story (see above on Fukasaku). (too early for video release)

Ichikawa (1915-) also directed numerous episodes of the excellent matatabi samurai TV series, COLD WIND MONJIRO (*Kogarashi Monjiro aka Monjiro, The Whistling Wind*) in the early '70s. At least six episodes are available in Japan on PONY CANYON video. (see next issue on matatabi films).

KAZUO IKEYO

CUT THE SHADOW (*Kage O Kiru*) (1960) w/ Raizo Ichikawa (Daiei) NO TAPE

GAMBLER'S CODE (*Kutsukake Tokijiro*) (1961) 86 min. w/ Raizo Ichikawa THE KUTSUKAKE TOKIJIRO

CULT MOVIES

story has been made several times. (see section on matatabi in next issue)

*** VHS/LASER(JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER

WITHIN A MOUNTAINOUS AREA (*Naka Yama Shichi Ri*) (1962) w/ Raizo Ichikawa, Tamao Nakamura (see section on matatabi in next issue) *** VHS/LASER(JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER

RABBLE TACTICS (*Zoyu Monogatari*) (1963) 91 min. w/ Shintaro Katsu, Eiji Funakoshi, Shio Fujimura (Daiei) NO TAPE

THIEF'S WHO'S WHO (*Dorobo Banzuke*) (1966) w/ Shintaro Katsu (Daiei) NO TAPE

THE LONE STALKER (*Hitori Okami or Human Wolf*) (1966) 83 min. w/ Raizo Ichikawa, Isamu Nagato, Asao Koike (see section on matatabi films in



Shingo's Challenge — Conclusion (#6 of 7)

next issue). **** VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER

PRIEST AND THE GOLD MINT (*Zoku Yakuza Bozu*) (1968) 80 min. w/ Shintaro Katsu Second of two films featuring Katsu as a wandering gambler priest proficient in judo and swordplay. Katsu's bro, Tomisaburo Wakayama, did a very similar series at TOEI called SCOUNDREL PRIEST (*Gokuaku Bozu or Evil Priest or Wicked Priest*) which started in '68 and ran for five films (see paragraph on director KIYOSHI SAEKI below and next issue's matatabi piece). #2 VHS(JAPAN) = DAIEI

BROKEN SWORDS (*Hiken Yaburi*) (1969) w/ Hiroki Matsukata, Kojiro Hongo, Shio Fujimura Remake of the Daisuke Ito screenplay SAMURAI VENDETTA (*Haku Oki or Chronicle of Pale Cherry Blossoms*) directed in 1959 by Kazuo Mori. VHS(JAPAN) = DAIEI

Ikehiro (1929-) also directed several films in the ZATOICHI, BLIND SWORDSMAN and KYOSHIRO NEMURI, SON OF BLACK MASS film series as well as one of the eight ninja films in the NINJA, BAND OF ASSASSINS (*Shinobi No Mono*) series (see next issue on ninja films). He also directed several of the eight picture turn-of-the-century yakuza film series, YOUNG BOSS (*Waka Oyabun*) w/ Raizo Ichikawa (NO TAPE, except for #1, VHS(JAPAN) = DAIEI). He also directed the samurai/period yakuza trio offfilms, TRAIL OF BLOOD (*Mushukunin Mikogami No Jokichi*), w/ Yoshio Harada for TOHO in '72-'73 (NO TAPE) (see next issue on matatabi).

MANSUKU ITAMI

GREATEST MAN IN THE WORLD (*Kokushi Muso aka The Peerless Patriot*) A silent film. NO TAPE

TADASHI IMAI

NIGHT DRUM (*Yoru No Tsuzumi aka The Adulteress*) (1958) 95 min. w/ Rentaro Mikuni, Ineko Arima, Masayuki Mori Wife of samurai who's stationed in

the capital is so lonely she has an illicit affair. It's discovered. Despite her husband wishing to forgive her and forget it, bushido and politics asserts that she must be executed. So she is by her own husband (I think he's the one who kills her - I haven't seen it). In any case, has reputation in the West of being excellent film. (Shochiku) NO TAPE

BUSHIDO SAMURAI SAGA (*Bushido Zankoku Monogatari or Story of Bushido Cruelty*) (1963) 123 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Yoshiko Mita, Masayuki Mori VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

VENDETTA (*Adauchi*) (1966) 103 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Yoshiko Mita, Tetsuro Tamba VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

TAI KATO

THE WIND, THE WOMAN AND THE TRIP (*Kaze To Onna To Tabi Garasu*) (1958) w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Rentaro Mikuni (Toei) NO TAPE

MISSION TO HELL (*Kogan No Misshi*) (1959) 100 min. w/ Hashizo Okawa, Jun Tazaki (Toei) NO TAPE

GHOST OF OIWA (*Kaidan Oiwa No Borei*) (1961) w/ Tomisaburo Wakayama Yet another version of the Yotsuya Ghost Story (see article in next issue on kaidan - period ghost stories) (Toei) NO TAPE

LONG SOUGHT MOTHER (*Mabuta No Haha*) (1962) 97 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Hitomi Nakahara, Hiroki Matsukata Classic of the matatabi sub-genre (see next issue) VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

SASUKE AND HIS COMEDIANS (*Sanada Fuunroku*) (1963) 91 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura Ninja film, believe it or not (see next issue). (Toei) NO TAPE

STORY OF CRUELTY OF OVERTHROWN REGIME (*Bakumatsu Zankoku Monogatari*) (1964) 99 min. w/ Hashizo Okawa, Ryohei Uchida, Junko Fuji (Toei) NO TAPE

MOUNT FUJI WIND (*Kaze No Fuji*) (1964) w/ Hashizo Okawa (Toei) NO TAPE

KUTSUKAKE TOKIJIRO - LONELY YAKUZA (*Kutsukake Tokijiro - Yukyo Ippiki*) (1966) 91 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Chiyonosuke Azuma This is supposed to be one of the best matatabi/period yakuza films ever made (see next issue) (Toei) NO TAPE

MUSASHI MIYAMOTO (*Miyamoto Musashi aka Sword of Fury*) (1973) 147 min. w/ Hideki Takahashi, Jiro Tamiya Released in U.S. as a two-parter under title, SWORD OF FURY 1 and 2. *** Amer. subt. VHS = VIDEO ACTION (out-of-print; not only that, but this version, besides being chopped into two parts as SWORD OF FURY, is scratched throughout, squeezed slightly and the pan-and-scan really makes this scope-ratio film suffer. Seek out the full-length — in other words, one-part — letterboxed Japanese tape) VHS(JAPAN) = SHOCHIKU

FLAMES OF BLOOD (*Honoo No Gotoku*) (1981) 147 min. w/ Bunta Sugawara, Mitsuko Baisho, Tomisaburo Wakayama, Tetsuro Tamba (see next issue on matatabi) ** 1/2 (Toho) NO TAPE

Kato (1916-1985) also did many excellent yakuza films, particularly 3 out of the 8 entries of the RED PEONY GAMBLER (*Hibotan Bakuto aka Woman Gambler*) series set in 1920s with the incredibly beautiful and charismatic Junko Fuji ('68-'72). VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

Also STORY OF MEIJI ERA CHIVALRY - THIRD GENERATION'S RISE TO FAME (*Meiji Kyotakuden - Sandaime Shumei*) ('65) with Koji Tsuruta VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI; HISTORY OF A MAN'S FACE (*Otoko No Kao Wa Rirekisho*) ('66) w/ Noboru Ando VHS(JAPAN) = SHOCHIKU; SONG OF MASSACRE (*Minagoroshi No Reika*) ('68) w/ Makoto Sato VHS(JAPAN) = SHOCHIKU.

BANSKO KANAMORI

THE WOODCUT ARTIST (*Uki Yoeshi - Murasaki Zukin*) (1923) NO TAPE

TEINOSUKE KINOGASA

THE LOYAL 47 RONIN (*Chushingura*) (1932) NO TAPE

(continued)

SUMMER BATTLE OF OSAKA (1937) NO TAPE
BATTLE AT KAWANAKA ISLAND
(Kawanakajima Kessen) (1941) NO TAPE

MOON WANDERER (Tsuki No Wataridori) (1951)
83 min. w/ Kazuo Hasegawa (Daiei) VHS(JAPAN)
= KINEMA

GATE OF HELL (Jigoku Mon) (1953) 90 min. w/
Kazuo Hasegawa, Machiko Kyo, Isao Yamagata Very
famous samurai film with reputation of classic in the
West. *** Amer. sub. VHS = HOME VISION VHS/
LASER(JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER

NEW TALES OF THE TAIRA CLAN - THREE
WOMEN (Shin Heike Monogatari - Yoshi O Meguro
Sannin No Onna) (1956) w/ Kazuo Hasegawa, Machiko
Kyo, Fujiko Yamamoto Supposedly loosely-linked
to Mizoguchi's NEW TALES...from the year before
with Raizo Ichikawa and second in trilogy. based on
the novel SHIN HEIKE MONOGATARI by Eiji
Yoshikawa (more familiar in the West as author of the
five-volume MUSASHI MIYAMOTO novel) NEW
TALES...#3 ('56) was directed by Koji Shima. #2 of 3
(Daiei) NO TAPE

NARUTO HICHO (1957) 101 min. w/ Kazuo
Hasegawa, Raizo Ichikawa, Fukijo Yamamoto (Daiei)
NO TAPE

KAGEROEZU (1959) 117 min. w/ Raizo Ichikawa,
Fujiko Yamamoto (Daiei) VHS(JAPAN) = KINEMA

JIICHI KONO

THE THUNDER KID (Asama No Abarenbo) (1958)
82 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Satomi Oka (Toei)
NO TAPE

REVENGER IN RED (Beni Dasuki Kenka Jo or Dasuki
Beni's Ambush) (1959) 74 min. w/ Chiyonosuke
Azuma, Hibari Misora (Toei) NO TAPE

HAWK OF THE NORTH (Doku Ganryu Masumune)
(1959) w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Yoshiko Sakuma *
** VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

ODA NOBUNAGA (Fuunji Oda Nobunaga) (1959)
95 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura This, and the
above HAWK OF THE NORTH, are extraordinary
evidence why Nakamura had already been one of
TOEI's biggest stars starting in the mid-50s. Nakamura
is the same Nakamura who later changed his name to
Kinnosuke Yorozyu and played Ito Ogami in the
LONE WOLF AND CHILD TV series. The name
change is in keeping with kabuki acting families'
traditions when one of their rank reaches a "higher
form or plateau" in their craft. Nakamura/Yorozyu
was capable of subtle scenes requiring complex emo-
tional nuances as well as explosive infernos of cathar-
sis. ODA NOBUNAGA is a prime example. *** 1/2
VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

YAKUZA'S YOUNG MASTER (Waka Sama Yakuza)
(1961) 90 min. w/ Hashizo Okawa, Chiyonosuke
Azuma (Toei) NO TAPE

KAGEMARU OF THE IGA CLAN (Iga No
Kagemaru) (1963) 69 min. w/ Hiroki Matsukata Ninja
film (see next issue's part three) VHS/LASER(JAPAN)
= TOEI

ENICHI KUDO

LADY YAKUZA, FLOWER OF EDO (Hana No Edo
Yakuza Hime) (1961) w/ Hibari Misora (Toei) NO
TAPE

CASTLE OF OWLS (Ninja Hicho - Fukuro No Shiro)
(1963) 91 min. w/ Ryutaro Otomo, Minoru Oki Ninja
film (see next issue) VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

THIRTEEN ASSASSINS (Jusannin No Shikaku)
(1963) 125 min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka, Kanjuro Arashi,
Ryohei Uchida, Ko Nishimura This and the next two
films, THE GREAT MELEE and ELEVEN SAMURAI,
are regarded as excellent by most Japanese critics,
writers who are notoriously hard-to-please when it
comes to samurai films. VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

THE GREAT MELEE (Dai Satsujin aka The Great
Duel) (1964) 118 min. w/ Mikijiro Hira, Ryutaro
Otomo, Minoru Oki VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

ELEVEN SAMURAI (Juuchinin No Samurai) (1967)
99 min. w/ Isao Natsuyagi (Natsuki?), Ryutaro
Otomo, Junko Miyazono, Ko Nishimura
VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

FORT OF DEATH (Gonin Shokin Kasegi) (1970) 97



Samurai Vendetta, directed by Kazuo Mori,
written by Daisuke Ito.

min. w/ Tomisaburo Wakayama, Ichiro Nakatani,
Minoru Oki Sequel to KILLER'S MISSION (Shokin
Kasegi) directed by Shigeiro Ozawa also w/
Wakayama. (Toei) NO TAPE

Kudo (1929 -) also directed quite a few yakuza
films, including the four film period-yakuza series
JIROCHO KESSHO KI ('60) (see next issue) and many
contemporary yakuza pictures such as BLOOD FEUD
- JAPAN'S DARK HISTORY (Chi No Koso - Nihon
Ankokushi) ('67) w/ Noboru Ando VHS(JAPAN) =
TOEI and AFTERMATH OF BATTLES WITHOUT
HONOR OR HUMANITY (Sonogono Jinginaki Tatakai
or Aftermath of the Gambling Code War) ('79)
VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI, the only one of that nine pic-
ture series not directed by Kinji Fukasaku.

KAZUO KUROKI

STREET OF MASTERLESS SAMURAI (Roningai)
(1990) 118 min. w/ Yoshio Harada, Shintaro Katsu,
Kunie Tanaka, Kei Sato, Michitaro Mizushima,
Hiroyuki Nagato Latest remake of this famous
samurai tale. *** 1/2 VHS(JAPAN) = SHOCHIKU

MASAKIHO MAKINO

STREET OF MASTERLESS SAMURAI (Roningai)
(1928) 30 min. Another story that has been remade
many times, most recently by Kazuo Kuroki (see
above) but also by Makino, himself, in '51 and '57. NO
TAPE

THE BEHEADING PLACE (1929) NO TAPE
JIROCHO OF THREE PROVINCES (Jirocho San
Gokushi) Extremely popular period yakuza series for
TOHO (9 films between '52-'54) (see next issue on
matatabi films) VHS(JAPAN) (entire series) =
KINEMA

HORDE OF DRUNKEN KNIGHTS (Yoidore Hachi
Manki) (1951) 101 min. w/ Seizaburo Kawazu Re-
make of Makino's silent STREET OF MASTERLESS
SAMURAI (see above) (Toei) NO TAPE

STREET OF MASTERLESS SAMURAI (Roningai)
(1957) 110 min. w/ Junshiro Konoe, Seizaburo Kawazu
Another remake of Makino's popular tale (Shochiku)
NO TAPE

RUFFIAN IN LOVE (Suteuri Kanbai) (1958) w/
Ryutaro Otomo (Toei) NO TAPE

BULL'S EYE FOR LOVE (Oshidori Kago) (1959)
Love that title! (Toei) NO TAPE

YATARO'S TRAVEL HAT (Yataro Gasa) (1960) w/
Kinnosuke Nakamura Another remake of the fa-
mous matatabi tale (see next issue). (Toei) NO TAPE

DAYS OF YOUNG JIROCHO (Waka Ki Hi No

Jirocho) series made up of three pictures with
Kinnosuke Nakamura as Jirocho: BOSS OF TOKAI
(Tokai No Kaoyaku) ('60) #1 VHS = TOEI, YOUNG
BOSS ALONE IN TOKAI (Tokai Ichi No Waka Oyabun)
(61) #2 NO TAPE and WILD WIND ON THE
TOKAIDO HIGHWAY (Tokaido No Tsumuji Kaze)
(62) #3 VHS = TOEI. There may be one more picture
in this series. (see next issue on matatabi/samurai
yakuza pictures)

SEN HIME TO HIDORU RAI (1962) w/ Ken
Takakura, Hibari Misora, Kinnosuke Nakamura
Historical samurai epic set in middle ages during the
great clan wars (or so it seems from the movie poster).
Besides the Nakamura/Uchida MUSASHI series,
Takakura's only appearance in a samurai film (until
Kon Ichikawa's 1994 CHUSHINGURA). (Toei) NO
TAPE

JIROCHO OF THREE PROVINCES (Jirocho San
Gokushi) series. Remake of Makino's earlier series,
this time for TOEI with four films between '63-'65
with Koji Tsuruta as Jirocho. This is rumored to be the
best Jirocho series but none of the four films is avail-
able on video. (Toei) NO TAPE

Makino was born in 1908 and died just recently in
1993. He was probably one of the most prolific Japa-
nese directors ever. His father was silent film pioneer,
Shozo Makino. Makino directed many excellent
yakuza films in the late sixties/early seventies, in-
cluding 9 out of 11 films in the TALES OF JAPANESE
CHIVALRY (Nihon Kyokakuden or Account of Japan's
Chivalrous Men) series, all starring Ken Takakura and
quite often co-starring Koji Tsuruta; 3 out of 9 films of
TALES OF SHOWA ERA CRUELTY (Showa Zan
Kyoden) series, all starring Ken Takakura ('65-'72) and
Junko Fuji's last film before her retirement to get
married: KANTO ACTRESS' CLAN (Kanto Hizakurige
Ikka or Cherry Blossom Fire Gang) ('72). All of these are
set in the 1920s and most feature alot of swordplay,
especially at the bloody climaxes. At least five of the
TALES OF JAPANESE CHIVALRY, all nine of TALES
OF SHOWA ERA CRUELTY and KANTO ACTRESS'
CLAN are available from TOEI (JAPAN) video.

TEIJI MATSUDA

THE LOYAL 47 RONIN (Chushingura) (1959) 183
min. w/ Chiezo Kataoka, Ryutaro Otomo,
Chiyonosuke Azuma, Kinya Kitoji Yet another ver-
sion of the oft-filmed saga. VHS (JAPAN) = TOEI

TANGE SAZEN (1958) 100 min. w/ Ryutaro
Otomo, Hashizo Okawa, Hibari Misora Matsuda is a
strange director with a wildly uneven output. He
directed 4 out of 5 of this film series that's a wildly
cornball samurai potpourri about the one-eyed, one-
armed swordsman (much of the corn can be laid at
Otomo's door, although TOEI policy is to blame for
the idiotic musical interludes that tended to ruin
many samurai films - not only at TOEI but also DAIEI,
TOHO and SHOCHIKU during the late fifties). How-
ever, Matsuda directed all entries in the near-excel-
lent TEN DUELS OF YOUNG SHINGO/SHINGO'S
CHALLENGE series and 2 out of 4 of the CRIMSON
BAT series (see next issue on female samurai). The
TANGE SAZEN series ran through 1962.

TEN DUELS OF YOUNG SHINGO (Shingo Juuban
Shobu - Dai Ichi Bu/Dai Ni Bu or Parts One and Two)
(1959) 103 min. w/ Hashizo Okawa, Ryutaro Otomo,
So Yamamura Pretty uniformly excellent sword se-
ries with former kabuki female impersonator, Okawa,
becoming proficient samurai film superstar. Okawa
portrays swordsman of illegitimate but royal birth
trying to get to his noble father by way of becoming
best swordsman in the nation. The late Okawa (he
was only 55 when he died in 1984) also appeared in
the later 1960s in 520 episodes of the Japanese TV
series, HEIJI THE SHOGUN'S DETECTIVE (Zenigata
Heiji) Okawa also appeared in a movie version,
ZENIGATA HEIJI ('67) VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI. (Kazuo
Hasegawa appeared as Heiji in a series of films for
DAIEI in the 1950s). *** 1/2 #1 VHS (JAPAN) =
TOEI

TEN DUELS OF YOUNG SHINGO (Shingo Juuban
Shobu - Dai San Bu or Part Three) (1960) 83 min. w/
Hashizo Okawa *** #2 VHS(JAPAN) = TOEI

TEN DUELS OF YOUNG SHINGO - SAGA CON-

CLUSION (*Shingo Juuban Shobu - Kanketsu Hen*) (1960) 87 min. w/ Hashizo Okawa *** #3 VHS (JAPAN) = TOEI

SHINGO'S CHALLENGE (*Shingo Ni Juuban Shobu or Shingo's Twenty Duels, Part One*) (1961) 88 min. w/ Hashizo Okawa, Satomi Oka, Mikijiro Hira, Mitsuko Sakuramachi #4 VHS (JAPAN) = TOEI

SHINGO'S CHALLENGE PART 2 (*Shingo Ni Juuban Shobu - Dai Ni Bu*) (1961) 90 min. w/ Hashizo Okawa, Satomi Oka #5 VHS (JAPAN) = TOEI

SHINGO'S CHALLENGE - SAGA CONCLUSION (*Shingo Ni Juuban Shobu - Kanketsu Hen*) (1963) 93 min. w/ Hashizo Okawa, Mikijiro Hira, Satomi Oka #6 VHS (JAPAN) = TOEI

SHINGO'S GREATEST DUEL (*Shingo Bangai Shobu*) (1964) 87 min. w/ Hashizo Okawa, Mitsuko Sakuramachi, Ryohei Uchida, Hiroki Matsukata, Junko Fuji #7 and last in the series VHS (JAPAN) = TOEI

CRIMSON BAT, THE BLIND SWORDSWOMAN (*Makana Nagare Dori*) (1969) 88 min. w/ Yoko Matsuyama, Isamu Nagato First in this film series (which was also a TV series) (see next issue on female samurais) #1 (Shochiku) NO TAPE

TRAPPED, THE CRIMSON BAT (*Mekurana Oichi jigoku Hada or Crimson Bat - Hell Flesh*) (1969) 87 min. w/ Yoko Matsuyama, Kikko Matsuo, Toru Abe, Junshiro Konoe #2 (Shochiku) NO TAPE

KENJI MIZUMI

(additional samurai films by this great director that I absent-mindedly left out of his filmography in last issue's Part One)

TANGE SAZEN AND THE NOBLE FAMILY'S VASE (*Tange Sazen - Koke Zaru No Tsubo*) (1954) 87 min. Mizumi's first film and the last in DAIEI's three film TANGE SAZEN series. VHS (JAPAN) = KINEMA

AMIGASA GONPACHI (1956) w/ Raizo Ichikawa (Daiei) NO TAPE

FREE-LANCE SAMURAI (*Momotaro Samurai*) (1957) w/ Raizo Ichikawa (Daiei) NO TAPE

SENBAZURU HICHO (1959) w/ Raizo Ichikawa Not sure, but from movie poster I say it was another tale of chivalrous thief. (Daiei) NO TAPE

I WANT TO DIE A SAMURAI (*Shinsengumi Shimatsuki or Account Of Assassins' Leadership*) (1963) 93 min. w/ Raizo Ichikawa, Tomisaburo Wakayama (aka Kenzaburo Jo), Shigeru Amachi, Shio Fujimura Subject matter of school of master swordsmen/assassins becoming power-mad as the Tokugawa regime crumbles. Many different factions emerge, and bloody chaos reigns. Same story also told in the excellent LAST SWORDSMAN (*Okita Soji*) ('75) directed by Masanobu Deme and Tadashi Sawashima's BAND OF ASSASSINS (*Shinsengumi*) ('70) (no relation to the DAIEI ninja series). *** VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER

RETURN OF GIANT MAJIN (*Dai Majin Ikaru or The Great Man Demon's Anger*) (1966) Second in this supernatural trilogy. (see next issue on kaidan-period ghost stories) ***

#2 VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER

THE MAGOICHI SAGA (*Shiri Kurae Magoichi*) (1969) 95 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Shintaro Katsu VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

Misumi, of course, directed several installments each of the ZATOICHI, BLIND SWORDSMAN and KYOSHINO NEMURI, SON OF BLACK MASS film series and 4 out of 6 of the LONE WOLF AND CHILD (*Kozure Okami*) film series (for more info on these see last issue's Part One)

KENJI MIZOGUCHI

THE LOYAL 47 RONIN (*Chushingura*) (1941) w/ Utaemon Ichikawa, Mieko Takamine Epic version of the story and probably the only version lensed in the turbulent forties. Originally released in two parts. (Shochiku) Amer. subt. VHS = SONY JAPAN FILM COLLECTION

MUSASHI MIYAMOTO (*Miyamoto Musashi*) (1944) w/ Chojiro Kawaharazaki, Kinuyo Tanaka This may be a lost film. (Shochiku) NO TAPE

FAMOUS SWORDSMITH BIJOMARU (*Mieto*

Bijomaru) (1945) w/ Eijiro Yanagi, Isuzu Yamada (Shochiku) NO TAPE

UTAMARO AND HIS FIVE WOMEN (*Utamaro O Meguro Gonin No Onna*) (1946) w/ Minosuke Bando, Kinuyo Tanaka Disguised story of government censorship dealing with early 19th century woodblock artist, Utamaro. Mizoguchi had to appeal to the U.S. Occupation to allow him to make a period film (which were largely banned '46-'51) *** 1/2

Amer. subt. VHS = NEW YORKER VIDEO

LIFE OF OHARU (*Saikaku Ichidai Onna*) (1952) w/ Kinuyo Tanaka, Toshiro Mifune Story of court lady who is banished to pleasure quarter as a prostitute because of her illicit affair with a young samurai. ** * Amer. subt. VHS = VIDEO YESTERYEAR (probably out-of-print)

UGETSU or TALES OF UGETSU (*Ugetsu Monogatari or Tales Of Moonlight And Rain*) (1953) 96 min. w/ Masayuki Mori, Kinuyo Tanaka, Machiko Kyo Probably Mizoguchi's most famous and greatest film. Two medieval families set out to a nearby city to sell pottery, are split up by chaos of war and tragic consequences occur. Supernatural elements subtly abound, and this is an incredibly beautiful, moving film. **** Amer. subt. VHS = HOME VISION LASER = CRITERION VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

SANSHO THE BAILIFF (*Sanjo Dayu*) (1954) 124 min. w/ Kinuyo Tanaka, Kisho Hanayagi, Kyoko Kagawa Compassionate daimyo (lord) is deposed and sent into exile. His wife, son and daughter go to live with her sister's family for several years (not shown in the film). Forced to once again leave, the mother, son and daughter are split up by slave traders and go through decades of degradation and horror. * *** Amer. subt. VHS = SONY JAPAN FILM COLLECTION LASER = CRITERION VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

CRUCIFIED LOVERS (*Chikamatsu Monogatari or Story By Chikamatsu*) (1954) w/ Kazuo Hasegawa, Kyoko Kagawa One of 17th century playwright, Chikamatsu's plays. A very successful, very selfish printmaker falsely accuses his wife of adultery with Hasegawa, his right-hand man who basically supervises all the quality work. Hasegawa and the wife flee together to avoid arrest - adultery was a crime punishable by death in those days! Unavoidably thrown together, they actually do fall in love. They're finally trapped and executed. A beautiful, transcendental romance. *** 1/2 Amer. subt. VHS = BALZAC VIDEO VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

NEW TALES OF THE TAIRA CLAN (*Shin Heike Monogatari*) (1955) w/ Raizo Ichikawa, Yoshiko Kuga The Heike clan (also known as the Taira clan), led by Ichikawa after his father's death, strike out against privileged, corrupt Buddhist warrior priests who wield enormous influence with the Emperor. *** Amer. subt. VHS = BALZAC VIDEO VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER

Mizoguchi is regarded by many, along with Kurosawa and Ozu, to be one of the greatest directors to ever emerge from Japan. He died in 1956 of leukemia. Most of his period films weren't specifically samurai but samurais more often than not figured as story characters.

KAZUO MORI

(sometimes mis-identified as Issei Mori)

VENDETTA OF THE SAMURAI (*Ketto Kajyu No Tsuji*) (1951) 82 min. Written by Akira Kurosawa w/ Toshiro Mifune, Yuriko Hamada (Toho) NO TAPE

GOBLIN MANGORO (*Mangoro Tengu*) (1957) w/ Raizo Ichikawa (Daiei) NO TAPE

DAYS OF YOUNG NOBUNAGA (*Waka Ki Hi Nobunaga*) (1959) w/ Raizo Ichikawa VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

SAMURAI VENDETTA (*Haku Oki or Chronicle of Pale Cherry Blossoms*) (1959) w/ Raizo Ichikawa, Shintaro Katsu From the screenplay by Daisuke Ito about the faithful friendship of Tenzen and Yasubei, two of the Loyal 47 Ronin. Remade by DAIEI in 1969 as BROKEN SWORDS (*Hiken Yaburi*). *** 1/2 VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER

JIROCHO ON MOUNT FUJI (*Jirocho Fuji*) (1959) 105 min. w/ Kazuo Hasegawa, Raizo Ichikawa,

Machiko Kyo, Ayako Wakao, Shintaro Katsu Another tale of the popular yakuza Robin Hood from the 19th century. #1 of 2 VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

RETURN OF JIROCHO ON MOUNT FUJI (*Zoku Jirocho Fuji*) (1960) 108 min. w/ Kazuo Hasegawa, Raizo Ichikawa, Shintaro Katsu #2 of 2 VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

TADANAO KYOGYO JOKI (1960) w/ Raizo Ichikawa Story of young daimyo (Ichikawa) and his troubles. VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

SHIRANUI KENGYO (1960) w/ Shintaro Katsu, Tamao Nakamura Pre-Zatoichi, Katsu plays a sword-wielding blind man (however this blind man is basically a villain). Has reputation of being one of Katsu's and Mori's best films. VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

SAMURAI GAMBLER (*Bakuto Zamurai*) (1964) w/ Raizo Ichikawa, Kojiro Hongo (see next issue on matatabi films) (Daiei) NO TAPE

Mori (1911-1989) was a good friend of Kurosawa's but worked predominantly at DAIEI from mid-fifties onwards. He directed three of the ZATOICHI film series as well as episodes of the TV series. He also directed the Matsukata-starring Nemuri film, FULL MOON SWORDSMAN (*Nemuri Kyoshiro Engetsu Sappo*) (for Zatoichi and Nemuri info, see last issue). Mori also directed films in the yakuza film series, BAD REPUTATION (*Akumyo*) w/ Shintaro Katsu (series ran from 1961-1974) (all except the last film - at TOHO - are available VHS/LASER = DAIEI/PIONEER); one or two of the YOUNG BOSS (*Waka Oyabun*) yakuza film series with Raizo Ichikawa; also 2 out of 3 of the period yakuza series, SURUGA YUKYODEN w/ Shintaro Katsu (NO TAPE) 3 out of 8 of the NINJA, BAND OF ASSASSINS (*Shinobi No Mono*) film series, VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER as well as MISSION: IRON CASTLE (*Shinobi No Shu*) VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI (see next issue on ninja films.).

NOBUO NAKAGAWA

GHOST OF YOTSUYA (*Tokaido Yotsuya Kaidan or Yotsuya Ghost Story On The Tokaido Highway*) (1959) w/ Shigeru Amachi Classic samurai horror tale. (see next issue on kaidan - period ghost stories) *** 1/2 (Shinto Studios) VHS (JAPAN) = CLARION LASER (JAPAN) = NIKKATSU (may be out-of-print)

QUICK-DRAW OKATSU (*Yoen Dokufuden - Hitokiri Okatsu*) (1969) 89 min. w/ Junko Miyazono, Ko Nishimura (see next issue on female samurais) #2 of 3 (Toei) NO TAPE

VENDETTA OF A SAMURAI GIRL (*Yoen Dokufuden - Okatsu Kyototabi*) (1969) 84 min. w/ Junko Miyazono, Toru Abe, Tatsuo Umemiya (see next issue) #3 of 3 (Toei) NO TAPE

Nakagawa (1905-1984) was an excellent director specializing in horror films during the fifties (mostly at SHINTOHO who went bankrupt in the very early '60s), and period/samurai films. He also directed the first of a two-picture NIKKATSU yakuza film series with Hideki Takahashi in 1969, CHERRY TREE LOYALTY OFFERING (*Sakura Sakazuki - Gikei Dai*). Samurai film director, Seichiro Uchikawa (see below) directed the second film.

SHIGEKI OZAWA

SWORD OF THE ITINERANT ACTOR (*Abare Kaido*) (1959) 91 min. w/ Utaemon Ichikawa (Toei) NO TAPE

GOBLIN FESTIVAL (*Tengu Matsuri*) (1961) 88 min. w/ Ryutaro Otomo (Toei) NO TAPE

REVENGER IN THE SHADOW (*Akai Kage Boshi or Red Star's Shadow*) (1962) (Toei) NO TAPE

KILLER'S MISSION (*Shokin Kasegi*) (1969) w/ Tomisaburo Wakayama, Yumiko Nogawa, Chiezo Kataoka, Koji Tsuruta First of a two picture series with Wakayama as an assassin/trouble-shooter-for-hire. (sequel is PORT OF DEATH (*Gonin Shokin Kasegi*) directed by Eiichi Kudo). ***

(I've seen a chopped-up Japanese TV print) (Toei) NO TAPE

Ozawa was one of TOEI's biggest directorial guns in the sixties/early seventies, helming mostly yakuza

(continued)

films, among them about half of the ten film **GAMBLER (Bakuto)** series and about half of the eleven film **GAMBLING DEN (Bakuchiuchi)** series, both starring Koji Tsuruta and quite often co-starring Tomisaburo Wakayama. (only the Kinji Fukasaku-directed of the **GAMBLER** series are available on video and four of the **GAMBLING DEN** series, two directed by Kosaku Yamashita). He also directed the first two **STREETFIGHTER** films (*Geki Totsu! Satsujinken* and *Satsujinken 2*) with Shinichi "Sonny" Chiba. Both are available from TOEI video. He also directed the fourth film, **ONNA HISSATSU GODAI KEN** ('76), in the **SISTER STREETFIGHTER (Onna Hissatsu Ken)** series (only one of the series not available on TOEI VHS). He was born in 1922 and is actually still around, though he seems to've been retired since the mid-70s.

KIYOSHI SAEKI

KUTSUKAKE TOKIJIRO (1954) w/ Masagoro Shimada Another version of this famous matatabi story (see next issue). VHS (JAPAN) = NIKKATSU / KINEMA

SCOUNDREL PRIEST (Gokuaku Bozu aka The Wicked Priest aka The Evil Priest) (1968) w/ Tomisaburo Wakayama First in this series for TOEI about a wandering gambler priest. Much violence ala judo and swordplay. It ran five films with #s 2, 3, 4 directed by Takashi Harada and the last, #5, by Buichi Saito (#3, 4, 5 are all available on TOEI VHS; #1, 2 I'm not sure about) (see next issue on matatabi films)

Saeki (1914 -) directed predominantly yakuza films for TOEI and is probably best known in Japan for directing #s 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 of the excellent **TALES OF SHOWA CRUELTY (Showa Zan Kyoden)** series with Ken Takakura (all available from TOEI VHS).

KO SASAKI

FORBIDDEN CASTLE (Binan Jo) (1959) 92 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura (Toei) NO TAPE

MAN WHO CAME ON THE WIND (Oshidori Dochu) (1959) 88 min. w/ Hashizo Okawa (Toei) NO TAPE

RIVER OF FURY (Doto No Taiketsu) (1959) 119 min. w/ Utaemon Ichikawa, Chiezo Kataoka (Toei) NO TAPE

SWORD AGAINST INTRIGUE (Naza No Naiban Daiko) (1959) 87 min. w/ Utaemon Ichikawa (Toei) NO TAPE

BENTEN, THE THIEF (Benten Koso) (1960) w/ Hibari Misora, Tomisaburo Wakayama (Toei) NO TAPE

SWORD OF DESTINY (Tsuki Kage Ito Ryu) (1960) w/ Koji Tsuruta, Hibari Misora (Toei) NO TAPE

GOBLIN PRIEST (O Bozu Tengu) (1961) w/ Hibari Misora, Chiezo Kataoka, Hashizo Okawa (Toei) NO TAPE

TADASHI SAWASHIMA

LORD AND THE PIRATES (1959) 84 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Katsuo Nakamura (Toei) NO TAPE

ONE-EYED WOLF (Katame No Okami) (1959) 87 min. w/ Ryutaro Otomo (Toei) NO TAPE

THE PIRATES (Kaizoku Bohansen) (1960) w/ Hashizo Okawa, Satomi Oka (Toei) NO TAPE

THE WANDERERS - THREE YAKUZA (Matatabi - Sannin Yakuza) (1965) 120 min. w/ Kinnosuke Nakamura, Tatsuya Nakadai, Hiroki Matsukata, Junko Fuji Has reputation of being excellent. (see next issue on matatabi films) (Toei) NO TAPE

THE GOLDEN COUPLE (Ogon No Yozoku) (1967) 90 min. w/ Hiroki Matsukata, Koichi Ose, Masumi Harukawa (Toei) NO TAPE

BAND OF ASSASSINS (Shinsengumi) (1970) Produced by T. Mifune w/ Toshiro Mifune, Kinya Kitoji, Rentaro Mikuni, Katsuo Nakamura, Yumiko Nogawa Same subject as **THE LAST SWORDSMAN (Okita Soji)** ('75) and **I WANT TO DIE A SAMURAI (Shinsengumi Shimatsuki or Account Of Assassins' Leadership)** ('63). No relation to the DAIEI ninja series, **NINJA, BAND OF ASSASSINS**. (Toho) NO TAPE

Sawashima also directed several period (set in

1920s) yakuza films, among them the first three of the four excellent **THEATER OF LIFE - HISHAKAKU (Jinsei Gekisho - Hishakaku)** series with Koji Tsuruta.

MASAKIRO SHINODA

ASSASSINATION (Ansatsu) (1964) 104 min. w/ Tetsuro Tamba, Shima Iwashita, Isao Kimura, Eiji Okada VHS (JAPAN) = SHOCHIKU

SAMURAI SPY (Ibun Sarutobi Sasuke) (1965) 102 min. w/ Koji Takahashi, Misako Watanabe, Eiji Okada, Tetsuro Tamba (Shochiku) NO TAPE

DOUBLE SUICIDE (Shinju Ten No Amijima) (1969) 142 min. w/ Kichieon Nakamura, Shima Iwashita From yet another Chikamatsu play, this the story of a merchant desperately in-love with a prostitute (Iwashita in a double-role - she plays his wife, too) who is also enamored of him. However, she's indentured; in other words, a slave until she brings in enough money to pay off her debt. The merchant's parents and brother, a samurai, are disgusted with him. He and the girl end up running away to die together in a love suicide. *** Amer. subt. VHS = SONY JAPAN FILM COLLECTION

SCANDALOUS ADVENTURES OF BURAIKAN (Buraikan) (1970) 104 min. w/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Tetsuro Tamba, Shima Iwashita (Toho) NO TAPE

UNDER THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS (Sakura No Mori No Mankai No Shita) (1975) w/ Tomisaburo Wakayama, Shima Iwashita A mountain bandit kidnaps a beautiful woman traveling through the forest who turns out to be a murdering demon. (see next issue on period ghost films)

**** VHS (JAPAN) = TOHO

BANISHED ORIN (Hanare Goze Orin aka Melody In Grey) (1977) w/ Shima Iwashita, Yoshio Harada, Toru Abe Excellent, poignant tale of turn-of-the-century wandering blind shamisen player and her tragic end.

**** VHS (JAPAN) = TOHO

GONZA THE SPEARMAN (1986) 126 min. w/ Shima Iwashita, Hiromi Go Tale of illicit love amongst samurais based on another Chikamatsu play. *** Amer. subt. VHS = KINO VIDEO

Shinoda (1931 -) was and is very influenced by the aesthetics of traditional Japanese theater, especially kabuki. One can see this in his dazzlingly beautiful shot compositions and the way he updates these aesthetics with daring uses of color and the mixing-up of ancient conventions with avant-garde visual language. He also directed three yakuza films at the beginning of his career: **MY FACE RED IN THE SUNSET** ('61), **TEARS ON THE LION'S MANE** ('62) and the very beautiful and transcendently nihilistic **PALE FLOWER (Kawaita Hana)** w/ Ryo Ikebe and Mariko Kaga (only one of the three on tape, VHS (JAPAN) = SHOCHIKU). He's married to actress, Iwashita.

TOKUZO TANAKA

KOINA NO ZANPEI (1961) 72 min. w/ Raizo Ichikawa Action-packed matatabi tale (see next issue) VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

THE GREAT KILLING (Dai Satsujin - O Ro Chi) (1966) 87 min. w/ Raizo Ichikawa May have same subject as TOEI's Eiichi Kudo-directed **GREAT MEE-LEE (Dai Satsujin)**. (Daiei) NO TAPE

WOMAN OF THE SNOW (Kaidan Yukigoro) (1968) 80 min. w/ Shio Fujimura, Akira Ishiyama Same tale as in Kobaya-shi's four-story **KWAIDAN**, here expanded to feature-length. (see next issue on period-ghost story films) VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

THE HAUNTED CASTLE (Hiroku Kaibyoden or Story Of The Ghost-Cat's Secret) (1969) w/ Kojiro Hongo (see next issue) VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

Tanaka (1925 -) also directed many entries in the **ZATOICHI** film series as well as the TV series; two of the **KYOSHIRO NEMURI**, **SON OF BLACK MASS** film series (see last issue) and 6 out of the 9 yakuza / war film series, **HOODLUM SOLDIER (Heitai Yakuza)** with Shintaro Katsu and Takahiro Tamura, all VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI. He also directed the 130 min **LOVE WOLF AND CHILD (Kozure Okami)** TV movie with Hideki Takahashi as Ogami, Tomisaburo Wakayama as Yagyu and Mieko Kaji as a female

yakuza boss (made in late '70s or early '80s) He also directed at least one of the most recent **KYOSHIRO NEMURI** TV movies with Masakazu Tamura.

SENKICHI TANIGUCHI

THE GAMBLING SAMURAI (Kunisada Chuji or Chuji's Travels) (1961) w/ Toshiro Mifune, Michiyo Aratama, Eijiro Tono One of the most famous versions of the story of Robin Hood-type gambler, Chuji. *** Amer. subt. VHS = VIDEO ACTION (out-of-print)

SAMURAI PIRATE (Daitozoku aka Lost World of Sinbad) (1964) w/ Toshiro Mifune, Mie Hama **1/2 LASER (JAPAN) = TOHO, NO TAPE

SEICHIRO UCHIKAWA

RETURN OF THE SAMURAI (Zankoku No Kawa or Cruel River) (1963) (Shochiku) NO TAPE

SAMURAI FROM NOWHERE (Dojo Yaburi or Dojo's Break-Up) (1964) This had a reputation in the late sixties/early seventies as a very good samurai film. (Shochiku) NO TAPE

ONE ARMED SWORDSMAN (Tange Sazen) (1964) w/ Tetsuro Tamba, Michiko Saga *** Amer. subt. VHS = VIDEO ACTION (out-of-print)

Uchikawa also directed #2 of the 2 film **NIKKATSU** yakuza series, **CHERRY TREE LOYALTY OFFERING - GAMBLING CODE (Sakura Sakazuki - Jingi)** ('69) w/ Hideki Takahashi NO TAPE

KUNIO WATANABE

DAIBOSATSU PASS (Daibosatsu Toge, Parts 1, 2, 3) (all three films, 1953) w/ Chiezo Kataoka (Toei) NO TAPE(S)

BIRTH OF A WOMAN SAMURAI (Onna Zamurai Tada Ima Tanjo) (1958) w/ Hibari Misora, Junshiro Konoe (Shochiku) NO TAPE

AMBUSH AT IGA PASS (Iga No Suigetsu) (1958) 99 min. w/ Kazuo Hasegawa, Raizo Ichikawa (Daiei) NO TAPE

BLOODY RIVER (Tenpo Sui Koden) (1958) 74 min. w/ Kokichi Takada, Koji Tsuruta Remade in 1976 by Satsuo Yamamoto. VHS (JAPAN) = SHOCHIKU

LOYAL 47 RONIN (Chushingura aka The Great Avengers) (1958) 138 min. w/ Kazuo Hasegawa, Raizo Ichikawa, Shintaro Katsu, Fujiko Yamamoto, Koji Tsuruta, Machiko Kyo VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = DAIEI/PIONEER

MUSASHI'S TWO SWORDSMEN (Futari No Musashi) (1960) 92 min. w/ Kazuo Hasegawa, Raizo Ichikawa, Shintaro Katsu, Kojiro Hongo, Tamao Nakamura VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

Watanabe (1899-1981) was an incredibly prolific director whose almost entire output was samurai or period films. He also, like fellow prolific filmmaker Masahiro Makino, worked at numerous studios, not seemingly tied-down to any one (Makino was under-contract to TOEI during the last years of his career). I've not seen a single one of Watanabe's films, but I get the impression he was of a somewhat old-fashioned style.

SATSUO YAMAMOTO

THE SCARLET CLOAK (Akai Jimbaori) (1959) (Shochiku) NO TAPE

ZATOICHI'S RESCUE (Zatoichi Ro Yaburi or Zatoichi, The Breakout) (1967) w/ Shintaro Katsu, Rentaro Mikuni #16 in the film series (see last issue's Part One of this article)

***1/2 (Daiei) VHS (JAPAN) = TOHO

BLOOD END (Tengu To or Goblin Saber) (1969) 102 min. W/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Go Kato I've only seen a chopped-up Japanese TV print, but even still this is a great film.

***1/2 (Daiei) NO TAPE

BRIDE FROM HADES (Botandoro aka Ghost Story Of Peonies And Stone Lanterns) (1968) 89 min. w/ Kojiro Hongo, Ko Nishimura, Takashi Shimura Excellent, poetic ghost story. (see next issue) ***1/2 VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

TENPOSUI KODEN - OOHARA YUGAKU (1976)

147 min. w/ Mikijiro Hira, Etsushi Takahashi, Ruriko Asaoka. Remake of Watanabe's BLOODY RIVER. Story of a non-violent samurai trying to help organize farmers as well as teach them more efficient rice-planting methods. Of course, this doesn't sit well with either a yakuza clan or government officials who have financial interests in the area. Yamamoto previously dealt with this as a subplot of ZATOICHI'S RESCUE. *** VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI (out-of-print)

Yamamoto (1910 - 1983) was a very politically-involved director. His films always showed how common people were exploited. Probably his most famous films in Japan were the first two of the NINJA, BAND OF ASSASSINS (Shinobi No Mono) series (both '62) (see next issue on ninja films) and THE GREAT WHITE TOWER (Shiroi Kyota) ('66) w/ Jiro Tamiya and Eijiro Tono, a tale of corruption in the medical department of a great Kyoto university VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = DAIEI/ PIONEER.

KIMIYOSHI YASUDA

FLOWER OF THE PLEASURE QUARTER (Hana No Yukyo-den) (1958) 98 min. w/ Kazuo Hasegawa (Daiei) NO TAPE

HOODLUM PRIEST (Yakuza Bozu) (1967) 85 min. w/ Shintaro Katsu. First of two films with Katsu as rambunctious wandering priest. (see next issue on matatabi or wandering samurai gamblers) #1 of 2 VHS (JAPAN) = DAIEI

THE LEFTY FENCER (Nuretsubame Katageri) (1969) w/ Michiyo Yasuda. Second of two films about a one-eyed, one-armed swordswoman (see next issue on female samurai films) (Daiei) NO TAPE


Yasuda (1911-1983) also directed numerous entries in both the ZATOICHI, BLIND SWORDSMAN film series and the KYOSHIRO NEMURI, SON OF BLACK MASS film series (see last issue). He also directed one of Raizo Ichikawa's very last films before his death, GAMBLER'S LIFE - UNSTOPPABLE BLOODBATH (Bakuto Ichidai - Chimatsuri Fudo) ('69) (Daiei) NO TAPE. He also directed several supernatural period films such as THE MASSEUR'S CURSE (Kaidan Kasegafuchi, 1960, then a remake in 1969) ('60 is VHS = DAIEI, '69 is NOTAPE), MAJIN, MONSTER OF TERROR (Dai Majin) ('66) (#1 in a trilogy) VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = DAIEI/ PIONEER; TOKAIDO HIGHWAY GHOST CONVENTION (Tokaido Obake Dochu aka Along With Ghosts) ('69) and the excellent 100 MONSTERS (Yokai Hyafu Monogatari or Story Of One Hundred Ghosts) ('68) both VHS/LASER (JAPAN) = DAIEI/ PIONEER. (see next issue on kaidan or in-period ghost story films).

Unfortunately, space prohibits my coverage of ninja films, specifically the excellent 8 film series from DAIEI, NINJA, BAND OF ASSASSINS (Shinobi No Mono). So, along with coverage on female samurai films (such as THE CRIMSON BAT and QUICKDRAW OKATSU series), matatabi films (wandering samurai gamblers), a director or two I may've missed this time, the kaidan or period ghost films, the ninja films will have to wait until next issue's concluding Part Three.

Thanks to Merlin David of SAMURAI VIDEO and Satoko Nakajima. SAMURAI VIDEO, P.O. BOX 372, Suffern, N.Y., 10901, fax# 914-357-0780, has quite a selection of both pre-record VHS samurai pictures as well as samurai films in the public domain. He has

films from the ZATOICHI, KYOSHIRO NEMURI, SON OF BLACK MASS, LONE WOLF AND CHILD, FANGS OF PUBLIC OFFICER (Hanzo The Blade), and NINJA, BAND OF ASSASSINS series as well as the first two Chiba STREETFIGHTER films as well as many others featured in these articles. Contact him for a catalogue. Also VIDEO SEARCH OF MIAMI has some samurai films, including LONE WOLF AND CHILD and HANZO THE BLADE films - their address is P.O. BOX 16-1917, Miami, Florida, 33116.

Corrections from last issue: LONE WOLF AND CHILD #4, HEART OF A FATHER... was directed by Buichi Saito NOT Kenji Misumi. ZATOICHI (1989) #26 was produced and directed by Shintaro Katsu NOT Shintaro Latsi. Also the film, HUNTER IN THE DARK (Yami No Kariudo) should've had **** instead of ***. Also ZATOICHI #9 ***, ZATOICHI #19 *** 1/2, ZATOICHI #23 *** ZATOICHI #24 **, ZATOICHI #25 ** 1/2. There were also three slightly-confused synopses - two of them were due to faulty memory on my part LONE WOLF AND CHILD #2 - it was one of the nefarious Hidari brothers pulling killers out of the sand by their heads, not Ogami. The problem/confusion about #5 is too complicated to go into and not that important. There was the omission of a couple of sentences in the synopsis of KYOSHIRO NEMURI AT BAY (#4) which made it sound like Princess Kiku was the one killed by Nemuri when it was in reality the shogunate informer (Naoko Kubo) posing as a nun and masquerading as Nemuri's long-lost, bastard sister....



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The underground lesbian scene in Paris is the focus of this landmark sex film detailing the experiences of a wealthy American woman in Paris named Sand, who enjoys painting her female friends nude. When Sand falls for a handsome man and his sister, she must make some decisions about her desires. Brigitte Juslin, Richard Windsor and Nicole Burgeot star. 82 min.

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The Libertine (1969)

Catherine Spaak gained international sex symbol status for her alluring performance as Mim, a sexy widow who discovers that her deceased husband had a secret apartment where he cheated on her. Now, she decides to explore her own sexuality in the same apartment with a number of partners. Will she stop her carousing after she meets handsome radiologist Jean-Louis Trintignant? 90 min.

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Sexus (1964)

A beautiful waitress is kidnapped and held until her wealthy father delivers the ransom. While her captors the waitress develop an attraction to one of her captors but another member of the gang tries to rape her, leading to a deadly triangle. Starring Virginia de Solan, this study in "physical excess" features raucous dance filmed in Elle El Lui, Paris' famed lesbian nightclub. 88 min.

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The Frightened Woman (1971)

Before "The Story of O" whipped everyone into a frenzy, the explicit story welcomed moviegoers into the wild world of sadomasochism. An S&M aficionado finds that the new participant in his waterside master-slave sessions is willing to take her submissive role to new levels... her master can realize his true dominance! Dagmar Lassander, Philippe Laroix star. 93 min.

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I Am Frigid...Why? (1973)

The sexual experiences of the teenaged daughter of a gardener on a large estate are the focus of this French thriller. After she is raped, the girl is sent to a boarding school where she gets into a lesbian relationship and, despite a kinky stint as a prostitute, remains frigid. Then, strange things occur when she's confronted by the man who raped her. Sandra Julien stars. 89 min.

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The Nude Set (1961)

French sex kitten Agnes Laurent is a spoiled young woman who copes her wealthy parents into sending her to Paris, where she plans to continue her romance with a hunky medical student. While in Gay Paree, Agnes is introduced to the strippers and swingers of the local nightlife and soon practices the hedonistic lifestyle she observes. With Philippe Noireud. 86 min.

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Olga's Girls (1964)

Kinky sadomasochism classic about a sadist named Olga who runs a drug and white slavery ring from her Chinatown headquarters. Upon discovering that her assistant is planning a rival business, Olga—who enjoys applying all sorts of torture to her "girls"—goes full-on to stop her. Audrey Campbell and Eys Danning star. 72 min.

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I Spilt On Your Grave (1962)

Heated landmark look at sexual relations and racism in the South during the early 1960s. Joe Grant, a light-skinned African-American, heads to a small town to investigate the lynching death of his brother and immediately draws the attention of a gorgeous heiress, whom he learns may have been involved in the killing. Christian Marquand stars. 103 min.

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The Twilight Girls (1961)

The controversial account focusing on the sexual intrigue at an all-girl school was originally censored in New York State because of the explicit nature of its lesbian scenes. Seeking to make a new life for herself following a family scandal, a new student encounters dangerous love and her own blossoming womanhood. Agnes Laurent, Georgine Spelvin star. 83 min.

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The Immoral One (1980)

A woman suffering from amnesia reconstructs her life from audiotapes and discovers that she has had a sordid past, involved in prostitution and unusual romantic entanglements. Follow the events that led to her amnesia, and meet such characters as her auto racing lover, her younger, endangered sister and a blackmailing madam. Sylvia Lumo stars in this sophisticated European sizzler. 86 min.

\$19.99

The Lickerish Quartet (1970)

Slightly kinky erotic tale from Radley Metzger focusing on a man, his wife and the man's stepdaughter who see a porno film starring a gorgeous woman, who becomes the fantasy of each. The lady finds the motorcycle-riding woman in a nearby town, and they each get a chance to realize their sexual desires. Silvana Venturini, Frank Wolff star. 90 min.

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Score (1973)

It's a male-swapping, Radley Metzger-style, as the master of chic screen sex captures the exploits of two suburban couples involved in wicked carnal games. Their heated roundies lead to a kinky confrontation where sexual preferences head off into lesbian and bisexual directions. Lynn Lowry, Claire Wilbur and Calvin Culver star. 89 min.

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Audubon Trailers, Vol. 1

This collection of trailers from Radley Metzger's famous Audubon Films offers fabulous teasers from 1960s European exploitation films of the 1960s and '70s. Included are come-ons for "Lickerish Her and She and Him", "A Woman", "The Price of Flesh" and such Metzger-directed gems as "Score" and "Camille 2000". 83 min.

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"Bare!"

"Days of Sin and Nights of Nymphomania"

"Her and She and Him"

The Dirty Girls (1964)

The erotic trials and tribulations of a Parisian prostitute are the focus of Radley Metzger's look at lust-filled amour near the Champs-Élysées. Among the streetwalker's acquaintances are a shy student, a client who prefers her in strange costumes, a man who turns violent during sex and an American businessman. And that's not to mention the ladies. Renee Roman and Denise Roland star.

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Days of Sin And Nights Of Nymphomania (1965)

Sexual purities, prostitution and revenge are the elements of this sordid sexploiter in which a former convict teams with his old pals for a wild night of orgies and porno films. The evening leads to a car accident, a kidnapping and—surprise!—true love! Stars Marianne Thomsen, Paul Martin.

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Her And She And Him (1972)

Stylish sensual sample of European erotica about an aspiring model in Paris who becomes a participant in a relationship with a revolving lesbian. When her female lover becomes too possessive, the model takes a job with a homosexual partner and her handsome assistant. Then the sparks really fly! Aired Frank, Nicole Deconne star.

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Camille 2000 (1969)

Radley Metzger's slick, sensual adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' "The Lady of the Camellias" tells of a beautiful, lust woman who uses her abilities in the bedroom to interact a nobleman while longing for a commoner. This scorching showcase of settings, lots of nudity and the incredible Denise Gaubert. 115 min.

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Carmen, Baby (1967)

Radley Metzger's titillating take on the "Carmen" story stars the exquisite (as Lina) as a sultry café waitress whose sexual manipulation of the men in her life—including a cop, a con and a rock star—leads to danger and, eventually, tragedy. One of Metzger's early softcore smashes, the film is famous for its highly-charged "bottle" scene. With Dana Arden. 80 min.

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35 YEARS BEFORE JURASSIC PARK, THERE WAS... THE LAND UNKNOWN

Special Article by Tom Weaver

The Land Unknown, Universal 1957. With Jock Mahoney, Shawn Smith, Henry Brandon

Since everybody and his uncle are falling all over themselves praising the technical quality of the laserdisc release of Universal's *Jurassic Park*, let's use that as an excuse to revisit (once again) the same company's 1950s attempt at the same theme. Jock Mahoney stars as a Naval officer/geophysicist accompanying a Navy expedition to the Arctic. Mahoney, Shawn Smith (a lady reporter from *Oceanic Press*) and machinist's mate Phil Harvey are sent out in a helicopter piloted by William Reynolds to investigate the phenomenon of a "polar oasis" — a body of warm water in the midst of the Arctic "desert of ice." (The preposterous-sounding premise is based on fact: Admiral Byrd's 1947 South Pole expedition had discovered just such an area. Stock footage of the "polar oasis" is incorporated into the movie.) Caught in a rising storm and "clipped" by a giant, screeching flying lizard, the damaged copter descends through heavy clouds, dropping 3000 feet below sea level, and sets down on the floor of a lush tropical valley. Spared the Ice Age, dinosaurs still roam its humid jungles — as does the sole survivor of a 1945 plane crash (Henry Brandon), now partially deranged, who cannily rules the dinosaurs through fear, and lusts after Smith.

Jack Arnold was originally slated to direct, but when the size and scope of the production was scaled down, Arnold allegedly balked and had himself removed from the project. (Since Arnold agreed to do even smaller Universal films later — *Monster On The Campus*, for instance — this report doesn't ring entirely true.) Virgil Vogel took the director's chair on the black and white/CinemaScope feature, creating the

movie's "Mesozoic Park" on Universal's process stage via cyclorama, foliage, fog, etc. The movie's monsters included a Tyrannosaurus Rex (played by a man in a hydraulic suit), a swimming Elasmosaurus (gliding along tracks at the bottom of the process stage's 100 x 300 pool) and giant monitor lizards (real ones, handled by Jimmy Dannaldson and photographically enlarged). If *Land Unknown*'s monsters look phony (they do) in our modern age of computer-generated special effects and movies like *Jurassic Park*, they wowed audiences and critics alike in 1957; like an immodestly proud papa, William Alland wrote in an article for *The Hollywood Reporter*, "The *Land Unknown* is certain to accomplish one thing — it will render all former methods of making manufactual animals move completely obsolete. It took three years to develop by the greatest inventive minds in the film crafts. As a result, *The Land Unknown* will present prehistoric beasts...performing with a fluidity of natural movement never before seen on the screen. Techniques of stop-motion photography, even with all of its modern-day embellishments, will never again be accepted by movie audiences after *The Land Unknown* hits the screen." (*Variety* praised the dinosaurs' "stark realism," *The Motion Picture Exhibitor* called them "terrifying and realistic," and *Harrison's Reports* raved, "the monsters depicted are so flexible and life-like that one accepts them as real.")

Intriguingly, the script sneaks in a bit of sex, as ten-years-stranded Brandon offers the men the spare parts they need for helicopter repair and escape if they leave Smith behind. More intriguing is the "reversal of expectations" as craven Harvey starts pushing for the swap, and even handsome leading-man

type Reynolds briefly entertains the notion of sacrificing Smith to the "caveman's" passions. Surprising, too, is the willingness of Reynolds and Harvey to coerce Brandon into handing over the spare parts (Harvey bests him in a fistfight and prepares to torture him with a torch). The sex angle, and the "true-to-life" depiction of Reynolds and Harvey as desperate men, aren't the sort of plot fillips an audience could realistically expect to find in a movie as exploitative as *Land Unknown*.

The phony, indoorsy look of the sound stage actually gave the movie's "hidden valley" an air of stylized other-worldliness. There was nothing Jock Mahoney could do with his "phony," didactic dialogue other than mouth it and come across as one of sci-fi's dullest and most lecture-prone heroes. Shawn Smith appears to give her role her best shot, but in these unreal surroundings, and bouncing most of her lines off Mahoney's stodgy, phlegmatic character, the deck was stacked high against her. Smith wears progressively less as the movie unreels; she abruptly jumps from rags to an intact shirt (and back again) when one early shot (Smith standing near a carnivorous plant) is inadvisably reused later in the picture. Vogel gave his monster-filled picture pacing and even a bit of mood (extreme close-ups, use of light and shadow); his direction, combined with the "adult" touches in the plot, gives *Land Unknown* an edge over many similar pictures with better special effects.

As a matter of fact, I much prefer *Land Unknown* to *Jurassic Park*. And, to be perfectly honest, that sort of worries me. ■



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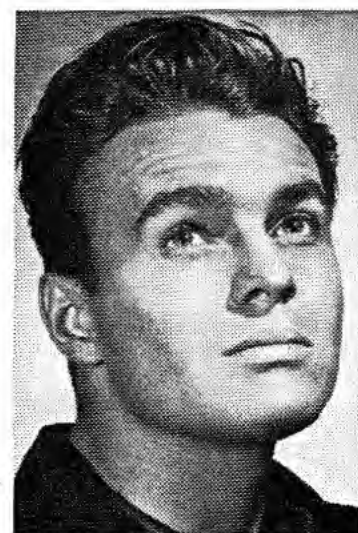
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"THE LAND UNKNOWN" (1-B)

Shawn Smith is a newspaper correspondent who goes on a South Pole expedition in "The Land Unknown," Universal-International adventure film in CinemaScope, in which she co-stars with Jock Mahoney and William Reynolds.



"THE LAND UNKNOWN" (1-C)

William Reynolds is a Navy helicopter pilot forced down on a mission to the South Pole in Universal-International's "The Land Unknown," CinemaScope adventure film in which he co-stars with Jock Mahoney and Shawn Smith.



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KAY PARKER: AMERICA'S FAVORITE MOM

In the late seventies and early eighties, Kay Parker became a most desirable addition to the family of adult movie actresses appearing regularly on the scene. Miss Parker was always something special. She was a bit older and more mature than the other girls, obviously a talented actress who brought more to her roles than the others were capable of doing. An attractive, buxom brunette, she was the spice that made such films as *Seven Into Snowy* (1977) and *Vista Valley PTA* (1980) appear as good as they did.

In 1980 her fate was sealed when she appeared for director Kirdy Stevens in *Taboo*, starring as the frustrated single mom who ends up having an incestuous affair with her young son, portrayed by Mike Ranger. The film's content caused plenty of controversial talk in many communities where it played. But more significant was Kay's adept and thoughtful handling of this tricky, touchy subject matter. As the mother driven by extreme despair to turn to the one person who seemed to love and understand her—her teenage son—she created a role that has never been equaled in the adult cinema. In 1983 Kirdy Stevens produced a direct sequel, *Taboo II*; again Kay was cast in the film, but the insidious incestuous web began to ensnare other families of Kay's acquaintance (including Kevin James, Dorothy LeMay, Honey Wilder, and others) thus relegating Kay Parker to a secondary role in this film.

No matter. By this time, Kay had been immor-

talized as the incestuous mother of the silver screen. On the one-sheets for other films, she was billed as Kay "Taboo" Parker, much as our favorite vampire actor was billed as Bela "Dracula" Lugosi.

Miss Parker appeared in around 50 XXX films before retiring and getting into film distribution in the mid 1980s. Currently she's living in Santa Monica, California where she works as a psychic counselor. A regal beauty, she is quite comfortable talking with others about her former career as an adult actress.

The lady has enough of a cult following that Danny Peary saw fit to include a listing on her in his book *Cult Movie Stars* in 1991. In his on-target commentary, Peary states: "Because Parker was a decent actress and played love scenes for eroticism rather than raunch, she made her films come across as more tasteful than they actually were."

Several years ago Kay appeared in a shot-on-video sequel to the original *Taboo* series. Her only participation was a bit of dialogue with actor Jamie Gillis, yet so desperate were the producers to tie this in with the original *Taboo*, that Kay was paid a thousand dollars to come in for a few hours and say her lines. She probably received more than some of the people who were paid for hardcore sex scenes. During the production of the video, Kay was overheard to tell a bystander, "Porno is a dirty business, but someone's got to do it!"

And as far as we're concerned, it might as well be Kay Parker. ■



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I WANT TO BE BAD
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INTIMATE REALITIES II
KATE AND THE INDIANS
L'AMOUR
LORELEI

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SEX PLAY
SEX WORLD
SPECTATORS
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TOO HOT TO TOUCH
UNTAMED
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THE YOUNG LIKE IT HOT

Erotic Terror And Babes With Swords: The Screenplays Of Steve Tymon

by Brad Linaweaver



Kathy Shower(left) Lisa Haselhurst in *The Night Realm*.

"He's the fastest screenwriter in Hollywood." The subject of this oft-repeated accolade is Steve Tymon, a leather jacket wearing, 6 foot 5 inch (that's TALL) native of Houston, Texas, of both Irish and Japanese heritage. In other words, an unusual enough combination of elements to be perfect for a career in Hollywood.

Starting out in Long Beach with a sale to a science fiction magazine,* it wasn't long before the siren call of low budget films attracted him to writing for the audience that really matters – the audience that doesn't read, the majority, the future! As is so often the case, no-budget and low budget work led directly to better things, including a plum assignment on *Ring of Fire II: Blood and Steel* with a boasted two million dollar production price tag ... which means that some money had to be spent on it.

That's coming a long way from a bad notice in *Fangoria* regarding *Witchcraft V: Dance with the Devil* where the main problem for the reviewer seemed to be that Tymon's script was formulaic. Imagine a formula being adhered to in the fifth film of a series, no doubt a disturbing idea for someone who wants to be a critic arguing for the highest possible standards in ... *Fangoria*?

Whether writing an episode of *Divorce Law* for the Playboy Channel, doing articles on computers and gaming, or ranking up film credits for *Sweet Evil*, *Legal Briefs*, *Campus Hustle*, *Final Deception*, *Fraternity Demon*, *Death Match*, *Bloodsport 3*, or a dozen more, Tymon is a thorough professional. And what makes him a good subject for *Cult Movies* is a recurrent theme of his work: namely, that one of the most interesting phenomena in the universe is the sight of a beautiful young woman with a lethal weapon as counterpoint to her flimsy attire.

This March will see the release of two representative Tymon features, *Night Realm* and *Dark Secrets*. Following is an exclusive interview for *Cult Movies* on *Night Realm*. After that we'll get to some less exclusive material on *Dark Secrets*.

Interview With Steve Tymon

Cult Movies: *Night Realm* is one of those post-apocalyptic films where, despite the nuclear devastation of the earth, beautiful young models have survived with all their make-up intact. I hope this question doesn't give away the big surprise.

Steve Tymon: In the first version of the script you don't find out that it's after World War III until the end; but the version that was actually shot establishes this from the start. The producer and director wanted me to convey as much information as I possibly could, up front, so that the audience knows where the technology comes from.

CM: Who is releasing *Night Realm* – and how long before it's on "USA – Up All Night" ... with all the nudity cut out?

ST: The producer is Michael Meyer for Mark I Productions – who also directs and also produced the recent *Death Match* and *Legal Briefs* (Tymon wrote both).

CM: When I read the first draft of *Night Realm* I had the same reaction I would from reading "Penthouse Forum!"

But I noticed that the sex was toned down in the final shootingscript. Is this a common pattern with your work – starting out with something sexier than what is finally shot?

ST: That is absolutely correct. I tend to have more sex and violence in my scripts than what actually ends up on screen. That is actually a marketing decision. The amount of sex in the original *Night Realm* was actually a bit risky. We did tone it down. We had to reshoot some of the sexier scenes and we may have toned it down too much; but overall the film looks very good.

CM: Speaking of the film looking good, who are some of the actresses in this one?

ST: We're very fortunate having Kathy Shower....

CM: I'd like to see her do that.

ST: (laughter) That really is her name. Kathy plays the good queen and Lisa Haselhurst is the evil queen. And speaking of queens, the film also includes "B Queens" Liz Kaitan and Karen Russell, and a number of other women I like such as De'Anne Power and a beautiful girl named Bianca. They all did a good job.

CM: I'd ask who the actors are, but who cares. But seriously folks....

ST: Sonny Landham turns in a fine performance. He was the Indian in *Predator*. And there's Richard Chavez who was the TV series version of *The War Of The Worlds* as one of the regulars. One of the actors is screenwriter Shane Black who gets several million dollars a script for the *Lethal Weapon* series.

CM: Inotice in the original scripts that Queen Morgana – who is a very evil character – receives her just desserts from Verrik when he gets his soul back from the magic gem she has used to entrap his essence. In the rewrite she seems to get off easier.

ST: The idea of her being softer just developed. She has been dominating everyone around her and then at the end she is now truly in love with the man who had been her victim. In the first version it's her turn to be dominated by him; but in the final version she is doing it to herself. You might say there's more irony in the final version.

CM: Something that happens a lot in *Night Realm* is when one woman defeats another and then grabs the defeated one by the hair. Do you think the line between classic pornography and mainstream is being eroded?

ST: Yeah, that's an important question. We're in a period after *Basic Instinct* was a big mainstream hit. We're in a period after Traci Lords got a lot of attention as a pop culture figure. One of the movies I wrote, *Legal Briefs*, a comedy about a law firm, has Ron Jeremy play a bartender. I'm sure you know he's a porn star. He does very well in *Legal Briefs*!

CM: Or look at Barbara Dare in Fred Olen Ray's *Evil Toons*; or how Traci Lords did her first non-porn in a science fiction movie for Roger Corman.

ST: Now I'll tell you something really good for *Cult Movies*. The whole thing about women yanking other women's hair in classic porn well, it's different now. Today you can't show that. Current pornography avoids any violence involving women at all costs! The adult industry has become restrictive and self policing. And if you do scenes of bondage or discipline, there is no penetration: there is no real sex going on. Whereas, in mainstream film, sex is a lot more open and you can do things like *Night Realm* and other projects. Legitimate film has a lot more freedom than porn in many ways!

CM: So you're saying low-budget "legitimate films," such as many of yours, can actually be more kinky and sexually imaginative than porn in today's market?

ST: A tricky question. I don't know if it's about more imagination – but in a number of areas you can go further in anything that's not hard-core. Right now all that porn has going for it is erections and penetration.

CM: Unlike passive characters in today's sex industry, your kink of movie has strong, confident women – warriors and fighters. But these images of women also feed into male chauvinist fantasies, don't they?

ST: I like writing about strong female characters. In real life I enjoy being surrounded by intelligent, success-

ful, beautiful women. I don't think it's sexist to appreciate beauty or to go for the best in all things – which I hope answers your question about having it both ways. Women want strong images of women; and men want to admire these same images. This is reflected in my writing.

CM: John Norman, author of the Gor Books, told me that he has a more positive view of women than his feminist critics will grant him. I'm not comparing Norman's work to yours except in terms of the science fiction environment and costumes ... belonging to an overall genre.

ST: I think that's an interesting comparison and I understand what you're saying about John Norman. Uh, I've read some of them. The first six volumes were good adventures but, after that, they turned into S & M tracts. The two atrocious Gor movies aren't his fault, of course.



Oliver Reed was in them, unfortunately for Reed.

CM: The presence of a star in those films raises a basic question about low budget movie land. Fans of Fred Olen Ray appreciate that he uses character actors and old stars whenever possible in his pictures. What's your take on his?

ST: Yes, it's a good idea. It always helps. If you look at *Campus Hustle* or *Legal Briefs* on USA (both released by BRI Productions), they are admittedly light-weight, sexy comedies with no one of any weight involved with them! But in *Night Realm*, there is more name value in Sonny Landham and Richard Chavez. Kathy Shower is pretty recognizable as well, at least for connoisseurs of *Playboy*. I tend to put Richard Lynch in my films when I can. And we used Martin Kove, a villain from the *Karate Kid* series, in *Death Match*. It comes down to budget.

CM: Do you think Forry Ackerman will ever do a cameo in one of your scripts? He's done around fifty movie appearances, you know.

ST: I would love to have Forry in a project. A friend of mine who has helped put together some projects, Cheryl Rixon, a former *Penthouse* Pet of the Year, is a friend of Forry's – so I hope it happens one day. She and I have both enjoyed visiting the Ackermansian.

CM: As everyone who has been there can attest, there's more than monsters and spaceships adorning those walls. There's also pretty girls!

ST: Forry has great taste.

CM: I imagine that on a movie like *Night Realm* the fight coordinator has a demanding job.

ST: Sure. Jerry Peddington was the primary fight coordinator. He goes way back into the late '60s as a karate champion. He did a lot of fight choreography up in Oregon. This is a crucially important job on movies like this. And as you've already noticed, the action genre is what appeals to me most.

CM: Who are some of the writers who influence your approach to action writing?

ST: I like Robert E. Howard a lot. He is one of the best writers for doing action scenes. *Night Realm* shows that influence, at least in that it straddles sword-and-sorcery and science fiction. And no one could describe a battle sequence more vividly than Howard.

CM: Which script of yours do you think has best realized your action sequences as you intended them?

ST: *Ring of Fire II: Blood and Steel*! They had the most money.

CM: I won't ask what *Night Realm* cost but I'd assume there wasn't room for many mistakes. How did you manage the fight scenes with the karate, the science fictional weapons.

ST: They were the biggest problem we had. They had lights on the end of them and the trick was to keep them working when they were slamming into each other. We ended up with two primary metal ones when we wanted to have the lights on; and a lot of the other times we used plastic ones without lights. And the ones you see used in the fight did have to stand up to those impacts. On one occasion a light fell out of one. It did work out, though they largely held up and I hope the effect won't have to be enhanced, which is kind of expensive.

CM: As we have discussed, a lot of your scripts require action sequences. You've worked with the husband and wife team of Brian Thomas and Dana Fredsti, who are probably best known for their participation in *Army of Darkness*.

ST: She was the head "deadite" (head swordfighter) in the battle scenes and he was the on-set armorer on *Army*, Sam Raimi's third *Evil Dead* film. But I crossed paths with Dana and Brian on a film of mine that will probably never be released, *Ninja Nymphs In The 21st Century*. We were all part of the fight stunt team, and although they weren't the key choreographer of the sequences, they did make contributions that were used. They do very impressive stuff, which is what you need in low budget films. They are about the only good thing in *Princess Warrior*. It was great for them working on *Army of Darkness*! It's an amusing film.

Of course, Brian gets temporary jobs on big productions. He gave some historical advice on *Interview With The Vampire*. The pimp's knife in one of the opening scenes is his work.

CM: As a last question, what genre best describes *Night Realm*?

ST: Well, there will always be films like this. You could say this genre began with Roger Corman - sexy women as action heroes in films with other exploitable properties. And they are cheap to make, of course. *Night Realm* was originally sold on the fact that it could be done entirely on one sound stage without one exterior shot. So it is one of those rare films that can be done in one location on one sound stage. Just all at once.

For commentary on the second Tymon opus, I spoke to his co-workers on the set of *Dark Secrets*. The first night I went up to a literal castle in the Hollywood hills, built by an eccentric British millionaire as a residence. As a movie set it was without equal and a number of celebrities were there for the post-midnight party.

I wound up an extra in the party sequence shot for the picture, standing next to the dapper star, Justin Carroll. (By the time this article sees print, he should have finished acting in a horror film about cats produced by the son of Douglas Hickox - the man who gave us *Theater of Blood*!) Later that night I met the female leads, Monique Parent and Julie Strain, both of whom I recognized from a close study of *Playboy* and *Penthouse* videos.

A few days later Steve invited me to a disreputable, squalid area in L.A. (in other words, a completely typical part of town) where I encountered the same folks in a different atmosphere than the previous shoot. The proper attire at the castle had been tuxedos and shimmering evening gowns. This time there was more leather, bizarre makeup, odd pieces of metal adorning various body parts and the widest possible variety of footwear (from brightly colored sneakers to shoes with stiletto heels that would puncture Godzilla's hide).

The nightclub was inspired by Club Fuck; but by no means a recreation nor a direct copy. This was a real nightclub some years ago; and leave it to historian Tymon to call for its recreation.

In olden days, Monique Parent would be referred to as a cute little blonde. With today's raised consciousness, she is called a hot babe. She told me that, "*Dark Secrets* is an automatic cult movie. It's very wild and interesting, a real eye opener. I was on the phone to my Mom this



Kathy Shower (left) and cast members.

morning. I had to tell her what I was doing."

With a name like Parent, one would expect no less. She continued: "We've had good coverage on this - a lot of takes - because they want to give it a big budget look." (My own experiences in the party scene certainly verified this.) She had nothing but good words for her co-stars and the script.

Parent was a good choice for the part Tymon had written, and brings guaranteed audience to the film - an essential requirement for a cult star. She has played the part of Janis Joplin in a film about Jimi Hendrix and been very much in evidence in *Married People*, *Single Sex 2* and *Playtime for Playboy*. She has two words for doing love scenes with Justin Carroll and Julie Strain: "Not tough!"

Julie Strain has a considerable fan following, and no wonder! A raven haired, six foot beauty, she is the ideal (non-Platonic, of course) of a *Playboy* centerfold. On the set of Fred Olen Ray's *Attack Of The Sixty Foot Centerfolds*, red haired bombshell, Tammy Parks, described to this intrepid reporter how she had to stand on tip-toes to kiss Julie during a love scene for a video taping. But the appeal of Julie Strain was sufficient to inspire Parks to stretch herself professionally.

At some point in the preparation of this article, it dawned on me that Steve Tymon has a more interesting job than most writers. He shows up on the set. He meets everyone. He helps put deals together. Did I mention that he meets these actresses? A real tough job....

Julie Strain had plenty good to say about Tymon's writing, such as: "This is one of the scripts I read that I really wanted to do. He was the first person to contact me about the project. I was even offered the lead part but turned it down because I preferred the role of the dominatrix."

At this point in the discussion, Steve Tymon's girlfriend walked in, a professional comedienne and actress, Glitter. With an exchange of knowing glances, Julie said, "I had to really dominate one of the other girls - and who, besides Glitter, would be able to dominate me?" Both of these women were meant for tight fitting leather outfits and boots that explore every inch of their well shaped legs.

While Steve Tymon listened on, Julie wrapped up her comments with: "I used to be a competitive body builder. I have swords and whips at home. I'm familiar with body moves - the way your body is supposed to go at the end of a movement. So I can handle a whip in front of the camera." Then with a big smile, she added, "I can also fake it."

There is an obvious need for actors and actresses to do as much of the action as they can, especially in movies that

don't have all the money in the world. During the night of the shooting at the castle, I watched Justin Carroll acquit himself admirably in a fight sequence.

His comment the evening of the sex club sequence was: "I think Steve will go a long way because he's good with characters." He agreed with Monique Parent about the coverage, and added that: "I enjoyed working with John Bowen (the producer/director of *Dark Secrets*). He's very professional and so is Keith, the D.P.!"

When asked for any specific advice for the readership of *Cult Movies*, Carroll opined, "They shouldn't play leap frog with a unicorn." It didn't seem like bad advice surrounded by the outre costumes of the extras who showed up for the recreation of an underground sex club.

After I finished talking to the performers, Steve Tymon introduced me to John Bowen. An energetic man, he had a lot to say about what makes a cult movie and how the Tymon script serves up the necessary requirements. "It is difficult to define what is cult," he began, "and often you don't know for sure until after the fact. I've shot porn movies that only became 'cult movies' because they were bad!" Of course, John Bowen had done R-rated comedies, such as *Nudity Required* and *Knockouts*.

Outside the door I could see painted faces seeming to float by in the dim light of the hallway. Bowen continued: "There are two elements that would qualify *Dark Secrets* to make it a cult movie. One is the people in the picture. Julie Strain and Monique Parent are cult actresses. They have fans who make this work. The second thing that would make this a cult movie is that we've gone where angels fear to tread."

With a nod to his writer, he elaborated: "We're showing the real underground night life of today's Los Angeles - which is the same as the night life of Chicago, Berlin, London, Paris, Tokyo.... The people here tonight are real! They've not been manufactured by filmmakers. They've been manufactured by themselves. They are living art!"

Bowen, Tymon and I discussed the obvious parallels between their film and comic books. "These are cartoon characters," said Bowen, "caricatures in a way. They look like dolls. They are larger than life personas."

As I left the set of *Dark Secrets*, I was grateful that Steve Tymon invited me for a glimpse of his world. Bowen was a fascinating character, proud of having acquired Linda Carter's Wonder Woman costume, and adamant that *Dark Secrets* was a major artistic step beyond his previous films.

As to the future of Steve Tymon, there is little doubt that he will keep working. He's become very proficient with a subject matter that will never go out of vogue in the movies, no matter what happens in the computer revolution. And as mentioned before, he knows a thing or two about computers, also.

Tymon note on computers: "I'm the lead designer/writer on the HUGE upcoming Chuck Norris videogame, *Blue Fury* (which will actually be filmed using Chuck and a number of other actors). The final script for this will be more than any 5-6 regular film scripts (and could go as high as 10 times larger than your usual film script)."

Final note on *Dark Secrets*: Tymon, "in addition to 'showing up on the sets' and writing the script, I also did some of the second unit directing - the entire Glitter sequence, where she terrorizes a roomful of slaves in her private dungeon, was directed by me. Whether or not this shows up in the credits, who knows? But at least it was an amusing moment - the first acting appearance of my girlfriend in one of my movies was in a sequence that I directed. Who says sleeping with the writer get you nowhere?"

His girlfriend, Glitter, gets the last word. "If I can get his head to keep fitting in the door, everything will be fine."

"On the Benefits of Programming," Isaac Asimov's *Science Fiction Magazine*, Feb. 1979.

Brad Linaweaver is the author of 50 short stories and as many articles. He has appeared in publications as diverse as *National Review*, *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, *Argosy*, *Amazing*, *Fantastic*, *Galaxy*, *Reason* and *Cult Movies*. Best known for his award winning novel, *Moon of Ice* (currently available from Tor books), he was the science fiction book reviewer at the *Atlanta Journal & Constitution* for two years. He has worked in radio and film; co-edited *Weird Menace* with Fred Olen Ray and *Free Space* with Edward E. Kramer; and is collaborating with Dafydd ab Hugh on two novels for Pocket Books. ■

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